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## ARTICLES

Communist Party Strategy in Indonesia 1948-59	Donald Hindley	253
Experiment in Local Government 1950-59	J. D. Legge	272
The Political Economy of Guided Democracy	J. A. C. Mackie	285
Indonesian Literature and the Social Upheaval	A. H. Johns	293
Strategic Geography and the Northern Approaches	A. J. Rose	304

## REVIEW ARTICLE

Some Recent Books on Indonesia	J. A. C. Mackie	315
--------------------------------	-----------------	-----

## REVIEWS

Moore: NATO and the Future of Europe	Derek van Abbe	319
McInnis: The Atlantic Triangle and the Cold War	Fred Alexander	321
Mansergh: Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs: Problems of Wartime Cooperation and Postwar Change	W. A. Townsley	323
Kennan: The Decision to Intervene	Norman Harper	324
Tang: Communist China Today	C. P. FitzGerald	326
Mason: Birth of a Dilemma	H. D. Black	328
Buttinger: The Smaller Dragon; Herz: A Short History of Cambodia	Arthur Huck	330
Qubain: The Reconstruction of Iraq	L. E. Fleming	331

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## SPECIAL NUMBERS

With one exception the articles in this number deal with aspects of contemporary Indonesia. It represents therefore an experiment in the production of 'special numbers' devoted wholly, or for the most part, to one area or to one problem. Should the experiment commend itself to readers, it is hoped that other special numbers may appear from time to time though not more frequently than once every twelve or eighteen months. The entire editorial work in connection with the articles in this issue has been undertaken by Mr J. A. C. Mackie, Head of the Department of Indonesian Studies in the University of Melbourne and the Victorian Associate Editor of the journal.

## BOOK REVIEW SECTION

As shown on the title page Dr J. D. Legge has now assumed editorial responsibility for the book review section of *The Australian Outlook*. Correspondence and review copies of books should in future be sent direct to Dr J. D. Legge, Department of History, University of Western Australia, Nedlands, W.A.

## CHANGE FROM QUARTERLY TO THRIC-EYEARLY PUBLICATION

Generally rising costs and in particular the increased postage rates recently announced by the Commonwealth Government have compelled the Commonwealth Council of the Institute to introduce economies into the production and distribution of *The Australian Outlook*. After careful consideration the Council has decided to reduce the number of yearly issues of the journal from four to three. This change will begin to operate from the beginning of 1960. Assuming reasonably stable costs in the future the size of the journal, considered on a yearly basis, will not be affected and annual volumes should continue to contain over 300 pages. The one effect of the change, then, is that the period between issues will be increased by one month. The Commonwealth Council trusts that it has acted to meet the problems of rising costs in a manner which is in the best interests of the journal and its readers.

*The Editor*

## HISTORICAL STUDIES

Australia and New Zealand

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### CONTENTS

Vol. 9. No. 33

November, 1959

Geographical Knowledge and Speculation in regard to Spanish Pacific Voyages . . . . .	<i>Celsus Kelly</i>
The Study of Australian History . . . . .	<i>J. A. La Nauze</i>
The Gipps-La Trobe Private Correspondence . . . . .	<i>S. C. McCulloch</i>
The Charity Organisation Society . . . . .	<i>Kathleen Woodrooffe</i>
The Second Serfdom in Eastern Europe as a Problem of Historical Explanation . . . . .	<i>I. Schöffer</i>
Accessions to Manuscript	Reviews

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Problems of Australian Foreign Policy, January-June 1959 . . . . .	<i>J. A. C. Mackie</i>
Reflections on the American Party System—1959 Model . . . . .	<i>D. W. Brogan</i>
Malaya—City and State . . . . .	<i>Charles Gamba</i>
Communist Policy and Tactics in Indonesia . . . . .	<i>J. M. van der Kroef</i>
Darwin and Social Theory . . . . .	<i>P. D. Marchant</i>
The Australian Beef Export Trade and the Origins of the Australian Meat Board . . . . .	<i>R. Duncan</i>
Electoral Distortion in New Zealand . . . . .	<i>R. H. Brookes</i>
The Member and his Constituents in New South Wales in the mid-nineteenth century . . . . .	<i>P. Loveday</i>
A Note: The colonial policies of the third Earl Grey . . . . .	<i>J. M. Ward</i>

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ARTICLES

## COMMUNIST PARTY STRATEGY IN INDONESIA 1948-1959

DONALD HINDLEY\*

### 1948-1952: OPPOSITIONISM AND SECTARIANISM

ALTHOUGH THE INDONESIAN COMMUNIST PARTY (P.K.I.) was founded in 1920, it has become an important and nation-wide force only in the last six years. After an ill-planned and ill-timed series of minor revolts in 1926 and 1927 the Party was outlawed by the Dutch colonial regime and ceased to function in any but a rudimentary way until Indonesia proclaimed her independence in August 1945. After the Republic was established, the Indonesian Communists, including those returned from exile, were scattered in three parties claiming Marxism as their basis: a Socialist Party, a Labour Party, and the P.K.I. itself, with a combined membership never exceeding 10,000. Many non-Communists were included in both the membership and leadership of these parties, but this did not lead to conflict while the Communists pursued their policy of reasonable nationalism and cooperation with and within the Republican government. From July 1947 until January 1948, Amir Sjarifuddin, a Communist within the Socialist Party, even headed a coalition government in which he also acted as defence minister. That the then-Communists allowed that government to fall, especially by normal parliamentary means, is strongly condemned by the present Party leaders.

In August 1948 a veteran Communist, Muso, returned from exile in Russia. He was acknowledged as the head of the Party and immediately began to overhaul the Party's organization and policy. He proposed, and the Party accepted, the merger of the three Marxist parties into one Communist Party, and the implementation of a new policy of strident anti-colonialism and anti-feudalism coupled with a united front strategy at home. Only a month after Muso's return, and before the organizational and policy changes could be properly effected, the P.K.I. was forced into a premature rebellion triggered, apparently, by the panicking of some Party members in the army.

From the wreckage of the Madiun rebellion, the P.K.I. has had a spectacular rise. Under new and youthful leadership the Party has become the most important Asian Communist Party outside the Soviet bloc. The key to this success has been the skilful application

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## COMMUNIST PARTY STRATEGY

of a 'National Unity Front' policy which claims origin in Muso's 'correction' and involves cooperation with bourgeois and religious parties and a carefully nurtured air of moderation, respectability, and responsibility. In the implementation of its front policy, the P.K.I. leadership has met very little opposition from within the Party, probably because most veteran leaders were killed in the rebellion and because the present huge Party membership has been built on the basis of agreement with the policy; furthermore, the policy has had apparent success. It would appear, too, that the P.K.I., unlike the Indian Communist Party, has had a free hand in deciding the tactics it considers best suited to the unique Indonesian environment. The present-day result of over eight years of the national unity front policy is a Party of 1½ millions and a Communist electorate of over 8 millions. This is a remarkable achievement, but, and this is the ultimate test of P.K.I. policy, the national unity front has not yet brought the P.K.I. into governmental power. Whether the front policy, suitably adapted to changing situations, can eventually win power for the P.K.I. is still an open question, the answer to which is not inevitable, depending perhaps less on the P.K.I. than on the action or inaction of the Indonesian non-Communists.

Within a few weeks of the Madiun rebellion, government troops had regained complete control. The dead included the leader of the P.K.I., Muso, three other politburo members, and most first and many second echelon leaders; the imprisoned numbered approximately 30,000 Communists and other leftists. In the following months what Communist or Communist-sympathizing officers there had been in the army were carefully weeded out. The Communist-led trade union federation, S.O.B.S.I., lost its president, while its membership fell from about 1½ million at the time of the rebellion to 220,000 a year later. It was fortunate for the P.K.I. that the Dutch attacked the Republic in December 1948 because most prisoners were released to prevent them from falling into Dutch hands and to take part in the defence of the Republic. For the next year the Dutch occupied most of Java while the Republican forces were too preoccupied with guerrilla warfare to brood over the Communists' abortive revolt.

From the time of the Madiun rebellion until January 1951 the P.K.I. was without a clear, unified leadership. The surviving Party leaders squabbled among themselves and issued individual, sometimes conflicting, statements on policy and attitudes. After the Dutch recognition of Indonesian independence in December 1949, the P.K.I. organization, shattered by the Madiun rebellion and the Dutch attack, was slowly re-established. Efforts were made to implement the decision of August 1948 to merge the Partai Buruh (Labour Party)

and the Partai Sosialis with the P.K.I., but total party membership, which was only 7,910 at the beginning of 1952, must have been below 5,000 at this time.

During 1950 the P.K.I. followed a confused series of lines. In the first half of the year there was some cooperation with the nationalist P.N.I. party, much talk of unifying the left wing (Communist, Socialist and Trotskyite) elements and at the same time increasing opposition to the Round Table Conference agreement, to the formation of the new unitary state and to the government. Towards the end of 1950 P.K.I. opposition hardened against the R.T.C. agreement, the government, and the President; the Trotskyite leaders were denounced as the accomplices of imperialism. During 1950 and 1951 the S.O.B.S.I. organized a massive strike campaign,<sup>1</sup> especially in those enterprises, such as estates, which produced the exports upon which the government so largely depended for its revenue; non-Communist trade union leaders were branded as gangsters, police spies, and traitors to the working class.<sup>2</sup> Communist-inspired armed bands are reported to have made attacks on estates in East and Central Java. During this period of 'oppositionism' and 'sectarianism' it would also appear that the P.K.I. scorned the symbols of Indonesian nationalism, arguing that the United States, not the Netherlands, was Indonesia's chief enemy, and even issuing a rejection, quickly retracted, of Indonesia's claim for the entry of West Irian into her own territory.

As a result of its confused leadership and sterile 'oppositionist' policy, the P.K.I. was unable to expand membership or to attract allies. Its few members were limited almost exclusively to Java, and the Sukiman government's arrest in August 1951 of some 15,000 'plotters against the state', including most P.K.I. and 3,000 S.O.B.S.I. cadres, almost annihilated the Party at one blow. Those arrested were soon released, but the effect of the arrests must have hastened the Party leaders along the road of its emerging new policy.

#### THE INCEPTION OF THE UNITY FRONT POLICY

#### 1951-1953: THE UNITY FRONT POLICY EMERGES

At the P.K.I. National Conference held in January 1951, control of the politburo was wrested from the 'opportunistic leadership'<sup>3</sup> and

1. In 1950 7,784,271 man hours were lost due to strikes compared with 3,719,914 in 1951, 878,911 in 1952, and 4,812,090 in 1953.

2. Partai Komunis Indonesia (P.K.I.), *Kewaduhan Front Persatuan Buruh*, Djakarta: Jajasan Pembaruan, 1952, p. 17.

3. Njoto, 'Revolusi Oktober Rusia dan Revolusi Agustus Indonesia', *Bintang Merah*, Volume 13, October-November 1957, p. 409.

#### COMMUNIST PARTY STRATEGY

passed into the hands of several young men who were not identified with the policies and failures of the preceding years. The new leaders were, and remain, D. N. Aidit, M. H. Lukman, Njoto, and Sudisman, all at that time less than thirty-one years old. Both Aidit and Lukman had returned to Indonesia in July 1950 after more than a year in China and Vietnam.

Under its new leadership the P.K.I. almost immediately began a change in policy from 'oppositionism', with its resultant political isolation, to what the P.K.I. calls the 'National Unity Front'. It was possible to build the theoretical basis for the policy change on the foundations laid down in the pre-Madiun 'New Road for the Republic of Indonesia' resolution passed by the P.K.I. conference in August 1948.<sup>4</sup> That resolution had determined the nature of the Indonesian revolution as a 'new-type bourgeois-democratic revolution' for which the P.K.I. must built a 'National Unity Front' of all 'progressive and anti-imperialist people'. The working class was not strong enough to complete the revolution alone, but must lead this broad front with the peasants as its most important ally. The P.K.I. leaders after January 1951 justified the Party's moderation in demands and efforts towards friendship with non-Communist parties and groups as the inevitable and the only correct line in the stage of a 'new-type bourgeois democratic revolution' within a 'semi-feudal', 'semi-colonial' country. In his speech 'Towards a New Indonesia',<sup>5</sup> delivered in May 1953, for example, Aidit pointed to the depressed and worsening economic position of the Indonesian workers, peasants, intelligentsia and national bourgeoisie as the result of the combined power of feudalism and exploiting imperialism; but each class separately is too weak to overcome the situation so that 'only unity, the unity of all anti-imperialist and anti-feudalist strength, can bring victory to the people's struggle'. Of course the intended Front was to be under the firm control of the P.K.I. The objective of the Front was a People's Democracy which would not only protect the workers and poor peasants, but also 'guarantee the stability of the position of the national industrialists' as well as safeguard the private property of wealthy and medium peasants. Accompanying the laying of the theoretical foundation for a policy change was a Party campaign to 'purge' the militant sections of the working class 'of sectarian diseases and of empty "leftist" slogans' which were envisaged as constituting

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4. P.K.I., *Djalan Baru Untuk Republik Indonesia*, Djakarta: Jajasan Pembaruan, 7th edition, 1953.

5. D. N. Aidit, *Menudju Indonesia Baru*, Djakarta: Jajasan Pembaruan, 2nd Edition, 1955.

an obstacle to the newly desired working class and multi-class unity.<sup>6</sup>

While acknowledging their debt to the Chinese Communist Party for theoretical writing and practical revolutionary experience, the new P.K.I. leaders were quick to emphasize the differences they perceived between the situation in which the Communist Party had worked in China and that in which the P.K.I. operated in Indonesia. The leaders made clear that the Chinese Communist Party had successfully employed a 'liberated base area' and a Red Army only because of certain conditions that were not present in Indonesia, namely, a large land mass bordering on a friendly state which could provide supplies and a safe rear, and a nationalist war against the Japanese.<sup>7</sup>

The change in Party policy became increasingly visible in the P.K.I.'s behaviour in parliament and the trade unions, in a new found veneration for nationalist symbols, and in a moderation of the Party's programme.

In March 1951 the P.K.I. cooperated with other parties in parliament on two important occasions. The representatives of the P.K.I. and the Communist-led peasant organization, Barisan Tani Indonesia, assisted the P.N.I. (Indonesian Nationalist Party) to force the Natsir (Masjumi) government to resign by staying away from parliamentary sessions so that a quorum could not be obtained. In the same month, a Political Parties' Consultative Council was established to coordinate the work of some fifteen opposition political parties and organizations. The Council was more under the influence of the P.K.I. than of any other party, and although relatively insignificant as a power factor in Indonesian politics it did bring together the P.K.I., the Trotskyite Murba Party, and the small Moslem party P.S.I.I. for the first time. As early as May 1951 the P.K.I. announced that 'P.K.I. is always ready to cease its opposition, provided that the Indonesian government honestly and genuinely pursues a policy of peace and wants to abrogate the R.T.C. agreement'; and when the Wilopo cabinet was formed the party announced its readiness to give support on the basis that 'if the government is rather progressive, as in the case of the Wilopo cabinet . . . , P.K.I. can give its support within certain limits'<sup>8</sup> while reserving for itself the right to criticize. Further, attacks by Party-controlled or -influenced armed groups were greatly decreased after the August 1951 mass arrests, although

6. P.K.I., *Kewaduhan Front Persatuan Buruh*, pp. 16 and 23; *Program P.K.I.*, Djakarta: Jajasan Pembaruan, 1954, p. 15.

7. See, for example, D. N. Aidit, *A Short History of the Communist Party of Indonesia*, New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1955, pp. 25-6.

8. D. N. Aidit, *Menempuh Djalan Rakjat*, Djakarta: Jajasan Pembaruan, 4th edition, 1954, pp. 33 and 45.

### COMMUNIST PARTY STRATEGY

not until after the formation of the first Ali Sastroamidjojo cabinet were aggressive activities stopped altogether.

S.O.B.S.I. greatly reduced its strike activities during 1951 and 1952, and began to make overtures for joint action towards other trade unions. The P.K.I. laid stress on the need for planning labour action so that it would receive the understanding and support of the other progressive sectors of society and would not be an obstacle to the unity of workers, peasants and the national bourgeoisie. In September 1952, in line with P.K.I. policy, S.O.B.S.I. formally stated its chief aim to be 'to create a united workers' front by intensifying its activities and eliminating certain sectarian tendencies'.<sup>9</sup> S.O.B.S.I. also reputedly gave a no-strike pledge to the Wilopo government.<sup>10</sup>

P.K.I. realized the force and magnetic power of nationalism and in 1952 it ceased its attacks on Sukarno, who now became the symbol and guardian of the true Indonesian revolution. By May 1952 the P.K.I. was represented on the National Awakening Day committee, and by August 17 of that year, the seventh anniversary of the proclamation of the Republic, the Party had influential positions in celebration committees throughout the nation. Inevitably the P.K.I. now denounced the Dutch occupation of West Irian as well as anything interpretable as Western intervention in Indonesian affairs.

During 1951 and 1952 it became apparent that the P.K.I. was carefully pruning down its publicly-stated objectives, a necessary step if the Party was to grow large and at the same time be able to allay suspicions among the other parties as to its ultimate revolutionary objectives. One example of this process of moderation is the agrarian programme, which swung from demands for land nationalization to 'land for the poor peasants and medium peasants',<sup>11</sup> and an even more cautious agrarian programme in December 1951 which contained no demands for land distribution.<sup>12</sup> Another example is the P.K.I.'s attitude to the composition of governments. In the period of cabinet formation prior to the establishment of the Wilopo cabinet on April 1, 1952, the P.K.I. stated that it did not insist on a People's Democracy immediately, but wanted a cabinet based on the Political Parties' Consultative Council, the P.N.I. and the Socialist Party, and excluding the major Moslem party, the Masjumi.

9. Quoted in John Wolfard, 'Strengthening the Indonesian Trade Union Movement', *World Trade Union Movement*, May 1-15 1953, p. 19.

10. George E. Lichblau, 'The Politics of Trade Union Leadership in Southeast Asia', *World Politics*, Volume 7, Number 1, October 1954, p. 92.

11. P.K.I., 'Urgensi Program', *Kepartaian di Indonesia*, Djakarta: K.P.R.I., 1951, p. 293.

12. Herbert Feith, *Political Developments in Indonesia in the Period of the Wilopo Cabinet, April 1952-June 1953*, unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1954, p. 85.

## THE INDONESIAN ENVIRONMENT AS IT AFFECTS THE P.K.I.

At this point it is appropriate to take stock of the general environment to which P.K.I. strategy had to be attuned. What might be termed the socio-economic-demographic situation is working in favour of unrest. The population of Java and Madura has risen from 41,718,000 in 1930 to an estimated 56 millions in 1959.<sup>13</sup> The rapid population increase has not been accompanied by matching economic development and the results are a further fragmentation of already minute peasant holdings, an increase in number of landless peasants from what was already an estimated 40 per cent in 1949,<sup>14</sup> a rapid growth of the larger cities, and an approximate 10 to 15 millions unemployed and partly unemployed. The Japanese occupation and the war against the Dutch have greatly accelerated the uprooting of large sections of the population from their tradition-bound villages, while the revolution and the general infiltration of 'modernism' have given rise to an upsurge in material expectations. The expansion of the education system since December 1949 has assisted the breakdown of traditional values and the increase in material expectations that the stagnant Indonesian economy is unable to satisfy. As a counterbalance for these disruptive tendencies is the persisting strength of traditional mutual assistance patterns in the villages and the general respect for persons with status.

The state of government administration is also an important factor in the present Indonesian environment. The civil service is gravely inefficient; government prestige and means of disciplining recalcitrants are not great. In such a situation the government is unable, even if willing, to carry out a bold programme of capital saving and economic development necessary to raise standards of living and absorb 350,000 new workers per annum. A partial result of the government's relative ineptitude has been a series of regional revolts and a continuous inflation.

The Indonesian political elite has never been closely united and has undergone a process of further fragmentation since the proclamation of the Republic in 1945. The most obvious division lies between nationalists and supporters of an Islamic state. But the nationalists are also divided between the P.N.I. and a host of lesser

13. N. Keyfitz, 'The Population of Indonesia', *Ekonomi dan Keuangan*, Volume 6, Number 10, October 1953, p. 655.

14. Erich H. Jacoby, *Agrarian Unrest in Southeast Asia*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1949, p. 60; according to the estimate of Soewardjo, 'Pertanian Rakjat', in *Almanak Pertanian*, 1953 Djakarta, 1953, p. 219, in 1953 95 per cent of the peasants owned less than 1 hectare, and 70 per cent less than half a hectare.

## COMMUNIST PARTY STRATEGY

groups; the Moslems were united in the monolithic Masjumi in 1945, but important groups left it for religious and political reasons to form the P.S.I.I. in 1947 and the Nahdatul Ulama (N.U.) in 1952. The Marxists are scattered in the P.K.I. the Trotskyite Murba, the democratic socialist P.S.I., the Labour Party, and a number of obscure groupings.

The fragmentation of the political elite is reflected in the composition of Indonesia's parliaments, in which no two parties together have been able to command a majority. In the nominated provisional parliament, which lasted from August 1950 to March 1956, there was a number of individuals and groups who lacked public support and were therefore concerned with delaying elections.<sup>15</sup> Fear of an Islamic state formed a bond between Sukarno, the nationalists and the Communists. The Masjumi, generally expected to win a majority in the general elections and therefore the most eager to hold early elections, was the most feared by nationalists and Marxists and opportunists alike. As the elections drew near, the P.N.I. sought allies wherever it could in order to maintain a government exclusive of the Masjumi while it consolidated its hold on the government apparatus and used all available governmental means to win supporters and intimidate opponents. In the present parliament, elected in September 1955, 28 parties are represented. The P.K.I. emerged as one of the four big parties, though its control of seats, including those of its close associates, only rose to 19 per cent compared with 14 per cent in the provisional parliament. The Masjumi, though now considered less of a threat, has become further estranged from Sukarno and the nationalist parties.

A word must also be said concerning the general attitude of the Indonesian political elite towards the P.K.I.<sup>16</sup> The P.K.I. is not viewed as a party essentially different from other parties. As a result of Indonesian experience with Dutch colonialism, anti-capitalistic, anti-feudal and anti-imperialist goals are publicly proclaimed by virtually every Indonesian party. The P.K.I. has a reputation for nationalist struggle against Dutch colonialism, having provided the first modern martyrs for nationalism in the 1926-1927 rebellions in Java and West Sumatra and having fought alongside and even within the Republican

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15. All members of the provisional parliament were appointed, while 106 of the 236 members were from the former Federal Consultative Assembly, a Dutch-organized institution.

16. Such comments as follow do not, of course, apply to all Indonesians, especially members of the Masjumi, P.S.I., and Catholic Party; but they do seem valid as generalizations to help explain why the P.K.I. was not outlawed after the Madiun rebellion, why the government has not opposed the Party's growth, and why certain non-Communist parties have not hesitated to work with P.K.I.

#### DONALD HINDLEY

government from 1945 to 1948. That the P.K.I. turned against the republic at Madiun is remembered, but others who sought to take up arms against the government have been forgiven too.<sup>17</sup> The P.K.I. has been careful not to seem anti-religious, and has, since 1951, managed to work with the Moslem P.S.I.I., Perti and N.U. Finally, there is a widespread feeling that all streams of Indonesian political life should be given the opportunity to express themselves, while optimists have stated that even if the P.K.I. is allowed to operate it cannot take root in the easy-going, status-bound, traditional society. The attitude of an important segment of the nationalist leadership is given in the statement of Ali Sastroamidjojo in May 1955:

I do not see a threat in world-wide communism to values I hold . . .  
I do not believe the P.K.I.'s ties with international communism go beyond ideology and sympathy . . . They are a national party.<sup>18</sup>

#### THE BLOSSOMING OF THE UNITY FRONT POLICY

The actual objectives of the national unity front policy appear to have been threefold:

- (1) to create and exploit an atmosphere which would permit the Party to end its political isolation of 1951 and to expand its membership, organization and influence from the negligible and shaky foundations of 1951;
- (2) to foster and exploit divisions among the non-Communist parties, in particular to isolate the Masjumi and P.S.I. which are considered to be the most hostile to P.K.I. and the most Western-oriented; and
- (3) as a result of growth and new-won allies, to gain participation in the government as the first step towards complete Party control of a People's Democracy.

#### EFFORTS TOWARDS THESE OBJECTIVES

By a moderation in goals and demands coupled with a lusty use of nationalism, the P.K.I. sought to prepare the ground for co-operation with other parties and groups and for a rapid expansion of the Party itself. It sought to broaden its appeal to include not only the workers and poor peasants, but also medium peasants, the petty bourgeoisie and even the national bourgeoisie.

The overt long-term goal of the P.K.I. is a People's Democratic Government, whose programme was detailed by the P.K.I. Fifth

17. These include Iwa Kusumasumantri who became Minister of Defence in the first Ali Sastroamidjojo cabinet, Chairul Saleh, Minister for War Veterans' Affairs in the Djuanda cabinet, and many regional army commanders.

18. Quoted in A. Doak Barnett, *Echoes of Mao Tse-tung in Djakarta*, New York: American Universities Field Staff Reports, May 1955, p. 2.

#### COMMUNIST PARTY STRATEGY

National Congress in March 1954 and includes the guarantee of freedom of religion, speech, press and organization, the non-confiscation of the property of rich peasants, and protection for medium peasants and national industrialists.<sup>19</sup> The P.K.I. has also presented to the government periodic lists of short-term demands, designed to embrace the changing day-to-day demands of the 'revolutionary' classes and of special groups in society such as students, youths and women. Pains are taken to ensure the reasonableness of any demand made. Reasonableness also characterizes the P.K.I. attitude to the formation of new cabinets. In February 1952 the Party stated its desire for a 'national coalition cabinet' of all parties except the Masjumi—a desire repeated, with variations, until the present. In June 1955 the P.K.I. even declared its immediate goal in the approaching general elections to be a 'national government led by a progressive, non-Communist prime minister',<sup>20</sup> while in January 1958 Aidit, the P.K.I. secretary-general, explained that 'by bringing victory to the Communist Party . . . in the next elections we hope that a national coalition government can be formed in which some Communist ministers will participate'.<sup>21</sup>

The relative moderation in long-term goals and short-term demands, and the self-effacement when contemplating the formation of cabinets has served to give the impression of P.K.I. as a basically revolutionary but reasonable and democratic party, and has also served to broaden the social sphere of potential Communist penetration.

S.O.B.S.I. and its affiliated trade unions have also publicly changed character since the days of ceaseless and violent strike action and industrial sabotage in 1950 and 1951, softening their demands parallel to the moderation of P.K.I. demands. Strikes have continued, but on a greatly diminished scale and never aimed to embarrass or alienate the government. The government is viewed not as an enemy but as a fellow sufferer at the hands of the sole cause of the continuing economic crisis—foreign capitalism. S.O.B.S.I.'s present support of, and at times almost identification with, the government is exemplified by its statement that the Djuanda government's Five-Year Plan, announced in 1957, 'corresponds to the essential requirements of the people, must be fulfilled, and the trade unions must assist in its accomplishment'.<sup>22</sup>

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19. P.K.I., *Program P.K.I.*

20. P.K.I., 'Indonesian Communists Call For a National Coalition Government', *New Age* (weekly), Volume 2, Number 44, July 31, 1955, p. 6.

21. *Review of Indonesia*, Volume 5, Number 2, February 1958, p. 7.

22. Sugiri, 'The Great Horizons Open to Indonesian Trade Unions', *World Trade Union Movement*, August/September 1958, p. 42.

It was not a difficult task for the P.K.I. to transform traditional Communist hostility to the West into a violent Indonesian nationalism that could outshout the most rabid nationalist. The first step in this transformation was necessarily a dual one: to place the blame for the Madiun rebellion on Hatta and the Masjumi, and to proclaim the P.K.I. as an entity quite independent of foreign ties. It is not known to what extent the public believe the Communist version that the Madiun rebellion was due to 'the civil war policy of the Hatta-Sukiman-Natsir government', 'whose hands are stained with human blood and smashed brains';<sup>23</sup> but other parties have not objected to such Communist lies.

What might be termed the positive aspects of the P.K.I.'s ultra-nationalism are seen in the Party's campaigns in support of the '1945 Proclamation Republic',<sup>24</sup> of the movement to liberate West Irian,<sup>25</sup> with its concomitant army-civilian cooperation bodies, and of almost every proposal put forward by President Sukarno from an All-Indonesian People's Congress and simplification of the parties to a National Council and an all-party cabinet. The P.K.I. contrives to become identified with Sukarno in the public's mind, quoting and lauding him continually and receiving in return, as will be seen below, what might be viewed as presidential patronage. Acting as the self-appointed watchdog of Indonesian sovereignty, the P.K.I. has been loud in its condemnation of every aspect of Western policy that affects or might conceivably be purported to affect Indonesia's interests. At first the U.S. was the chief target for attack, but in line with prevailing feeling in Indonesia the Netherlands was declared the number one enemy, with its occupation of West Irian, support for subversive plots, and stranglehold on the Indonesian economy. S.E.A.T.O. and the U.S. came under heavy fire for their widely-believed spiritual and material assistance to the P.R.R.I.-Permesta rebels. The P.K.I. thus endeavoured to remove suspicion as to its nationalist integrity, and by ultra-nationalist agitation to enter the

23. See, for example, D. N. Aidit, *Audit Menggugat Peristiwa Madiun*, Djakarta: Jajasan Pembaruan, 1955; also P.K.I. *Buku Putih Tentang Peristiwa Madiun*, Djakarta: Depagitprop CC. P.K.I., 2nd edition, 1954.

24. See, for example, D. N. Aidit, *Pertahanan Republik Proklamasi 1945!*, Djakarta, Jajasan Pembaruan, 1955.

25. Mohammad Hatta, 'Indonesia Between the Power Blocs', *Foreign Affairs*, Volume 36, Number 3, April 1958, p. 487, states: 'For so long as West Irian is in Dutch hands, that long will the Communist Party of Indonesia be able to carry on a violent agitation, using nationalism as an excuse, to oppose colonialism and thereby touch the soul of the newly-emancipated Indonesian people whose memories are still fresh with the struggle for freedom against colonialism.'

#### COMMUNIST PARTY STRATEGY

mainstream of Indonesian nationalism and to become identified as the staunchest defender, along with Sukarno, of the Indonesian Republic.

On the basis of its programme, moderation and fervent nationalism, and within the general Indonesian political situation, the P.K.I. established friendly relations and informal cooperation with several other parties. While it is outside the scope of this article to trace in detail the meticulous way in which the P.K.I. gave support to the P.N.I. and Sukarno both inside and outside parliament, it is valuable to show the P.K.I.'s action at certain periods of political crisis, and to illustrate the responding willingness of the P.N.I. and Sukarno to be openly linked with the P.K.I.

In the parliamentary debates of October 1952 on the abortive military coup d'état, the P.K.I. argued and voted alongside the P.N.I. in the efforts to eliminate or at least restrict the Socialist Party's influence in the Army. When, towards the end of the life of the Wilopo cabinet, a majority of the P.N.I. considered it of benefit to their party and themselves to bring down the government, the P.K.I. withdrew its support from the government and was the loudest protester over the shooting of peasant squatters at Tandjong Morawa in March 1953, an incident which ultimately led to the resignation of the government. The P.K.I. helped give the first Ali Sastroamidjojo cabinet the votes it needed in order to exclude the Masjumi from the government, and after the withdrawal of the P.I.R. ministers in October 1954 the cabinet was dependent upon the P.K.I. for even a simple majority in parliament.<sup>26</sup> In return for its loyal support the Communist Party was rewarded by an order from P.N.I. chairman, Sidik Djojosukarto to all party branches: 'Establish close relations with the P.K.I. and cooperate closely with the N.U. I am confident you will carry out this task faithfully', and by such statements as that of P.N.I. leader, Gatot Mangkupradja, which recommended that the nationalists and Communists establish one front during the 1955 elections and try to win together.<sup>27</sup> In September 1953 the government had already banned Masjumi demonstrations on the anniversary of the Madiun rebellion as likely to confuse the public.

During the brief interlude of the Masjumi-led Burhanuddin Harahap cabinet, from August 1955 to March 1956, the P.K.I. and P.N.I. combined in a campaign of vituperation against the government and after the September elections demanded the early formation of a parliament and a government based on the election results. Although

26. S.O.B.S.I. showed its support for the government even to the extent of openly sabotaging a K.B.S.I. general strike in May 1955.

27. Reported in *Times of Indonesia*, October 9, 1953; May 25, 1954.

bitterly disappointed in the composition of the second Ali Sastroamidjojo cabinet, which included Masjumi but not the P.K.I., the Communist policy was to support the government while putting forward positive criticism on generally minor matters. This policy has continued under the Djuanda cabinet since April 1957. When faced with economic deterioration the government has found a ready apologist in the P.K.I. which puts the blame on world capitalism with its dual appendage, reactionary subversives and rebels. In the midst of the economic disruption and resultant complaints which followed the seizure of Dutch enterprises in December 1957, it was a Communist fellow-traveller who introduced the successful parliamentary motion of confidence in the government's handling of the West Irian liberation campaign.

Since shortly after the 1955 elections there has been a shift in political power away from parliament and the political parties to Sukarno and the army. In this situation the P.K.I. has shifted its emphasis away from alliance and identification with the P.N.I. to support for and identification with the president. The motivations and goals of Sukarno's political behaviour are outside the scope of this article. It is sufficient to note that Communist support for all his proposals, except 'bury the parties', has been accepted and rewarded by Sukarno's advocacy since the end of 1955 of P.K.I. participation in the government and by the inclusion of sympathisers or fellow travellers in the Sukarno-chosen Djuanda cabinet and National Council, the Djuanda cabinet and the proposed new Advisory Council.

Besides establishing amicable relations with the nationalists, including Sukarno, the P.K.I. has also developed friendship or working toleration with the N.U. and several lesser parties. The N.U. has persisted in opposing Communist participation in the government, but it does not publicly attack the P.K.I.; in turn it is included in the P.K.I.'s list of 'democratic' and 'progressive' parties which are not attacked. With the smaller P.S.I.I. and Perti Moslem parties, with which the P.K.I. was allied even in 1951 in the Political Parties' Consultative Council, the Communists have maintained friendly relations. Relations with what remains of the Trotskyites improved considerably after about 1952 until the Murba Party can be considered almost as an adjunct of the P.K.I., its purpose presumably to draw a certain unorthodox leftist fringe into the P.K.I. orbit.<sup>28</sup>

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28. In October 1953 the small Murba trade union federation, S.O.B.R.I., affiliated with the W.F.T.U.; in December 1954 Professor Prijono, a leader of both the Murba Party and the Indonesian Peace Committee, was awarded a Stalin peace prize.

#### COMMUNIST PARTY STRATEGY

In brief, then, the P.K.I. has succeeded in creating a political atmosphere favourable to the growth of the Party by a moderation in demands, a continuous campaign of nationalism, and painstaking efforts to end the P.K.I.'s political isolation and to become identified with the government and president. That the P.K.I. did launch successful membership and election campaigns is not surprising, though the magnitude of that success may be. Within obvious limitations support and sympathy for the P.K.I. can be measured in terms of claimed membership for the Party and its front and affiliated groups. Claimed Party membership had grown from 7,910 at the beginning of 1952 to 126,671 members and candidate members at the end of that year; then followed a digestion period and a subsequent renewed growth from 165,206 in March 1954 to about half a million in October 1954, 1,300,000 in September 1957, and about 1½ millions in December 1958. The expansion of membership has been carefully controlled and accompanied by ideological and disciplinary indoctrination. As total membership has increased, the distribution of the Party organization has been extended. According to Party sources, at the beginning of 1952 Party organization was newly and very unevenly distributed in Java and Sumatra only. After the 1952 membership drive Party organization was also established in Madura, Sulawesi, Kalimantan, Nusa Tenggara and Maluku; by October 1954 'almost throughout Indonesia'; and by the end of 1958 throughout the whole country, though still more intensively in Java and Sumatra.<sup>29</sup> As for the social composition of Party membership, the P.K.I. has been faced with an abundance of petty bourgeois candidates. A special attempt has been made after 1953 to win peasant members and Party leaders claim that the majority of its members are now peasants. Surprisingly for a Moslem and underdeveloped country, 10 per cent, or 150,000, of members are women.

The claimed membership of S.O.B.S.I., the Communist-led trade union federation, had risen from 1½ millions in 1952 to just over 2½ millions in January 1955, at which number it has apparently levelled off. The Communist-led peasants' front, Barisan Tani Indonesia, claimed 240,000 members in September 1953, and 3½ millions in April 1959. The stated membership of the Communist youth movement, Pemuda Rakjat, increased from 30,000 in March 1951 to 1 million in September 1959; that of the Communist women's organization, Gerwani, from 500 in 1950 to 650,000 in July 1959; and that of the Communist veterans' organization, Perbepsi, founded at the end of 1952, to 265,000 at the end of 1957. A Communist-led organization,

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29. D. N. Aidit, *Untuk Persatuan. . . . loc. cit.*; P.K.I., *Bahan-Bahan. . . .*, p. 54.

Lekra, is strong in the cultural field but has published no membership figures. A noticeable gap in the list of the Communist front organizations, and one that worries the P.K.I.,<sup>30</sup> is among university students where the P.K.I. has apparently made little headway as yet.

The P.K.I. has achieved notable success in electioneering, emerging the fourth largest party, with 6,176,914 votes, in the September 1955 general elections for parliament.<sup>31</sup> Only a year and a half later, in the local elections, the P.K.I. moved to first place when it received 7½ million votes in Java alone, emerged as the leading party in such important cities as Surabaya, Semarang, Jogjakarta, Madiun, Malang, Surakarta and Bandung, and attained second place in Djakarta.

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Of the three basic objectives of the 'unity front' period, the first, to create and exploit conditions favourable to the growth of the Party, has been achieved to a surprising extent. The work of the Party towards the second basic objective, to divide the non-Communist parties and isolate those less amenable to the P.K.I., has been seen in part in the survey of the P.K.I.'s cooperation with the P.N.I. and Sukarno against the Masjumi and P.S.I. The differences in policy and personality between the P.N.I. and Sukarno on the one hand and the Masjumi and P.S.I. on the other have been fully utilized by the Communists. The P.K.I. did not originate the division, but exploited it, found new grounds for it and permitted the nationalists to govern without the Masjumi and the P.S.I., an exclusion that has deepened suspicion and hostility between the two sides. The Party has mercilessly attacked the Masjumi, P.S.I. and, when it became evident that Sukarno would be pleased to be rid of the Vice-President, Hatta. The P.N.I. and Sukarno have been pleased to see what they consider their chief opponents harangued and calumniated, and have at times joined in the attacks. In Communist newspapers and speeches the Masjumi and Hatta are linked with the Darul Islam terrorists; both were blamed for the Madiun 'provocation' and the 'traitorous' Round Table Conference agreement with the Netherlands; both plus the P.S.I. were linked with imperialist agents and internal reactionaries as plotting to re-establish colonial power in Indonesia; all three, but especially the Majumi and the P.S.I. were identified

30. See, for example, Banggas, 'Memperbaiki Pekerjaan Partai Dikalangan Mahasiswa', *Bintang Merah*, pp. 57-65, which deplores the Communist weakness and rightwing socialist strength among university students.

31. The best account of the 1955 election campaigns, with a tentative analysis of voting patterns, is Herbert Feith, *The Indonesian Elections of 1955*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, Modern Indonesia Project, Interim Reports Series, 1957.

#### COMMUNIST PARTY STRATEGY

with the P.R.R.I.-Pernesta rebellion of February 1958. Faced with an apparent permanent exclusion from office, the continuous onslaught of slander and insinuation, and the seemingly growing influence of the P.K.I. within the government, many of the Masjumi and P.S.I. leaders took up arms against the government in the February 1958 rebellion—which both reflected and intensified their isolation from other political forces. It is clear that the 'unity front' policy has been successful in widening the differences between the non-Communist parties where another policy would have narrowed them.

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In the achievement of the third objective, participation in and eventual control of the government, the P.K.I. has had least success. Despite President Sukarno's support, since at least the 1955 elections, for Communist cabinet membership, this has been prevented by strong opposition from the other political parties and, presumably, the army.

In the first Ali Sastroamidjojo cabinet the Minister for Defence was widely considered a fellow-traveller, while the Minister for State Welfare was at least a Party sympathizer. In the Djuanda cabinet, hand-picked by President Sukarno, there were, reportedly, at least three fellow-travellers or Party sympathizers. The National Council, established and selected by Sukarno in May 1957 as an advisory body for the cabinet, included at least five Communists or fellow-travellers among its 45 members.<sup>32</sup> The National Advisory Council and the National Planning Council, formed by Sukarno at the end of July 1959 as part of the implementation of the return to the 1945 Constitution, exclude Masjumi and democratic socialist P.S.I. representatives but include a large representation of Communists, fellow-travellers and Party sympathizers. The current work of the P.K.I. in local government since the 1957 elections, and especially in those regions, towns and villages where the Party obtained a majority, has yet to be appraised, but may be presumed to be contributing towards the consolidation and extension of Party power at the local level.

It is difficult to speculate on P.K.I. influence upon, as distinct from membership in, the Government. The P.K.I., as the largest and best-organized party in the country, has probably influenced the government towards more extreme measures against Dutch economic interests; its readiness to give vehement support to almost any measure of Sukarno may have made the President more ready to

32. Justus Maria van der Kroef, 'Indonesia's "New Life" Movement', *Eastern World*, Volume 11, Number 11, November 1957, p. 18.

implement policies he wished but might otherwise have hesitated to pursue, such as uncompromising civil war against the rebel government in 1958, the continued exclusion of Masjumi and Socialist Party members from any role in the government or the new bodies being established under the 1945 Constitution, and the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly followed by the decree return to the 1945 constitution. But the Party has failed to prevent such measures as the Foreign Investment Act of September 1958, the postponement of the 1959 general elections, the prohibition of strikes in 'vital' industries, the recent cancellation of part of the 1957 Regional Autonomy Law, and the prolongation of its 'state of danger' in the country by which army commanders have much power over civilian and political affairs. Of vital importance for the P.K.I., however, has been the government's and President's continued toleration of the growth of the Party and its ancillary organizations and the measure of official support for the Party as evidenced by the presence of government leaders at various P.K.I. and front organization meetings.

#### A GENERAL CONSIDERATION OF THE NATIONAL UNITY FRONT POLICY

It has been observed that there are three possible ways for the P.K.I. to win control of the state: by parliamentary means, by a Maoist armed revolution, and by a variation of the Gottwald coup d'etat.<sup>33</sup>

The first two seem the least practical for the P.K.I. at the present time. It would appear that of the major non-Communist political forces, the army, the N.U., the Masjumi, the various rebel groups, probably the P.N.I. and possibly Sukarno in the eventuality, would not permit the P.K.I. to sit in the cabinet, let alone quietly take over full control of the state by parliamentary means. Furthermore, the present establishment of a powerful Presidency along United States lines, and the plans for the appointment of a large number of military and 'functional group' representatives to sit in parliament alongside the elected representatives, are means of removing the possibility of a P.K.I. electoral victory leading to P.K.I. control of the government.<sup>34</sup> As for waging armed revolution, the P.K.I. considers that the geographical, social and historical conditions for a successful Communist revolution are not present in Indonesia today. This judgment appears to be sound. The decimating experience of the Madiun rebellion

33. A. Doak Barnett, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

34. President Sukarno is the only conceivable candidate for the Presidency. While it is not known what would happen if he were not available for the presidential elections, it is almost certain that the Communists would not be allowed to win the elections however many votes they could muster.

## COMMUNIST PARTY STRATEGY

and the continued absence of Communist access to weapons further detract from the prospect of revolution.

The P.K.I.'s national unity front policy was presumably aimed to win sufficient strength for the Party, divide the non-Communist forces, ally with those elements susceptible to cooperation with the P.K.I., and neutralize those elements hostile to the Communists, so as to prepare the way for Communist entry into a coalition government. The next step, the establishment of a People's Democratic Government could be achieved by methods used in Eastern Europe. The P.K.I. has been successful in the first part of its plan, but has been stopped, for reasons outlined above, from entry into the government. The question then arises, what would be the necessary conditions for a successful Communist coup d'etat without the Party's prior opportunity to exploit the advantages of ministerial office? They would include a fairly large, well-disciplined revolutionary Communist Party, Communist control of an armed force, the acquiescence or apathy of the majority of the other armed forces, Communist infiltration into the government apparatus, and a demoralized, weak opposition. These conditions do not obtain at present in Indonesia. A mass Communist Party exists, but its leaders must have grave doubts as to its ability to act as a revolutionary force to overthrow the present order; the Party has not gained access to significant supplies of arms,<sup>35</sup> nor, apparently, has it been able to deeply infiltrate the upper echelons of the civil service, the police or the armed forces; and the non-Communist forces, still far superior to the P.K.I. in numbers and striking force, would almost certainly unite to crush a Communist coup attempt.

In determining their present and future policy it would appear that, given present or not-so-different conditions in Indonesia, the P.K.I. leaders have little choice. Armed revolution could destroy the Party; a return to 'oppositionism' would result in a severe reduction in Party membership, stringent restrictions in Party activities, and the probable arrest of important Party leaders.<sup>36</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, that there have been no visible signs of disagreement between Party leaders as to the general correctness of the national unity front policy. This policy has proved to be incapable of achieving governmental power in the near future, and to give rise to major difficulties in the effort to form an iron-disciplined revolutionary

35. P.K.I. has several times tried, but failed, to win approval for plans to create 'people's volunteer battalions' ostensibly to fight the anti-government rebels.

36. Some prominent non-Communists believe that the removal of the P.K.I. leadership would paralyze the Party, as was the case in 1948 and August 1951 when the P.K.I. was small and not well-organized.

DONALD HINDLEY

party. But it has brought certain influence upon the government, as through the newly appointed advisory bodies established within the framework of the return to the 1945 Constitution, and if it brings freedom from persecution, organization problems can be overcome by intensive indoctrination of members. Further, as long as the Party organization and activities can be maintained, the P.K.I. leaders must feel that they can bide their time until economic and demographic factors, which each government has been incapable of tackling, exacerbate social and political conflicts to the point at which Indonesia, in theory, falls ripe into the Party's hands. The next year or two will show whether there are non-Communists with the desire and ability to prevent such a course of events.

## EXPERIMENT IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT 1950-59

J. D. LEGGE\*

### I

INDONESIA'S REVERSION TO THE CONSTITUTION of 1945 may well prove to have ended a distinct period in the Republic's handling of its problem of regionalism. The West Sumatran revolt of February 1958, coming as the climax to a year of growing regional dissatisfaction, had already revealed the clear failure of the policies so far applied in this field. While the virtual defeat of the rebellion may have strengthened the hand of the central government, or at least of the central military authorities, it did not by itself guarantee national unity for the future. It still remained for Djakarta to seek a way of removing the underlying causes of regional separatism. For the future, however, there was likely to be a change in the centre's method of approach to this task.

Hitherto the problem of regional separatism had been viewed primarily from an institutional standpoint. The provisional constitution adopted by Indonesia in 1950, when she converted herself from a federal into a unitary state, recognised the diversity of the archipelago and was careful to promise a wide field for the exercise of local initiative. Article 131 provided for 'the division of Indonesia into large and small regions possessing the right to control their own affairs', and to each region was promised 'the greatest possible degree of autonomy'. In this way the idea of decentralisation within the unitary state was offered as an alternative to a federal method of satisfying local patriotisms. The next seven years saw attempts to construct suitable local government machinery which could meet regional demands for a greater control over matters of local concern.

Progress was at first slow. It was not until late in 1956 that a basic local government law to replace the existing provisional legislation was able to secure parliamentary consent, and this alone helps to explain the continuance of regional resentments. Interim arrangements had been introduced before 1956, but their temporary character limited their effectiveness. The centre was reluctant to transfer powers to local authorities until the whole local government system could be placed upon a firmer legislative foundation. More important was the delay in providing an adequate financial

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basis for local operations. Without a greater degree of financial independence such small doses of autonomy as were at first granted could not mean very much. The delay was in part deliberate, for officials of the central government were genuinely doubtful about the wisdom of moving too hastily, and were apprehensive about the possible dangers of allowing too free a hand to inexperienced local leaders chosen by popular election.

But the failure of the plan cannot be attributed solely to the initial reluctance to implement it in full or to the fact that it was not given a fair trial. In fact, in spite of the early delays, the institutional approach was applied, in the end, in as thoroughgoing a manner as regional pressures had demanded; and yet the acceptance in principle of this fuller autonomy coincided with the peak of regional separatism. It would seem that there were still conflicts of interest which could not be solved by mere political machinery.

In spite of its failure the local government experiment is worth some examination. The gradual evolution of the plan was the product of a struggle between officials of the central government on the one hand and political forces on the other, in the course of which at least some of the issues involved in maintaining national unity were made clear.

## II

The basic local government law, passed in December 1956 and proclaimed in the following January as Law 1 of 1957, followed in its broad outline the provisional system which had been established in Java, Sumatra and Borneo under an Act of the original Republic of Indonesia during its struggle for independence (Law 22 of 1948).<sup>1</sup> Both measures provided for the establishment of a system of local governments, each composed of a representative and an executive council, in certain of the territorial subdivisions of the country. Provinces (or First Level Regions as they were subsequently styled) were intended to satisfy the feelings of broad regional consciousness to be found in such areas as West Sumatra, Atjeh or Sulawesi,<sup>2</sup>

1. The State of East Indonesia, one of the constituent states in the federal republic to which Holland transferred sovereignty in 1949, had also passed a local government law of its own (Law 44 of 1950), and this continued in force for the time being in Celebes, the Moluccas and the Lesser Sundas after the formation of the unitary state.

2. The first provincial divisions to be drawn were found in many cases to be unsatisfactory, and a later trend saw the division of existing provinces to form units more closely coinciding with economic regions or ethnic divisions. Thus Atjeh was carved as a separate province out of North Sumatra in 1956, and Central Sumatra was divided into West Sumatra (Minangkabau), Riau and Djambi in 1957.

#### EXPERIMENT IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

and were seen as substitutes for the constituent states of a federation. Provinces in turn were to contain smaller divisions which would have responsibility for the control of matters of more immediate interest to the districts concerned. Altogether, both laws envisaged three levels of local government—provinces, *kabupatens* (former regencies in Java) and municipalities, and a lower level based either on individual villages or on groupings of villages. But there were points of difference between the two measures which were of prime importance. These concerned the problems of defining the units of local government, of determining the powers which might be properly exercised by local governments, and of striking a balance between autonomy and central supervision. The new law was more flexible than the old in its elaboration of a pattern of units of different sizes, more generous in its determination of powers, and more modest in its requirements for the general supervision of local activities by the central government. In these respects it represented a general retreat by the centre under pressure from the regions and the political parties.

In fact these three issues were really different facets of one primary problem which overshadowed all attempts during the years 1950-1957 to draft an acceptable law: the problem of reconciling the surrender of large powers of self-government to the major divisions of the country with the responsibility of administering a politically unsophisticated rural population. The latter task had been performed in the past by a central administrative service, organised on territorial lines, whose chain of authority extended through the descending levels of province, residency, regency (*kabupaten*), district and sub-district to the village.<sup>3</sup> The officials making up this service—governors, residents, regents (*bupatis*), district officers (*wedanas*) and sub-district officers (*tjamats*)—formed a distinct and elite service of the central government—the *pamong pradja*. In colonial times the two higher ranks of the service—governors and residents—were Dutch, while the remainder were Indonesian. With independence the service, now completely Indonesian, continued to demonstrate the same paternal tradition as it had possessed before, and it remained as the main arm of the central government. It was intended, however, that the full development of regional autonomy would enable the burden of general administration to be shared by local authorities, and the local government plan envisaged the gradual withering away of the administrative corps as councils, established at the levels of province, *kabupaten* and village.

3. This was the pattern as it had developed in Java. Elsewhere there were slight variations in the arrangement of administrative divisions.

were able to take over its functions. That was the theory. In practice the centre was unwilling, for good reasons as well as dubious ones, to abdicate its responsibilities entirely. In consequence, it was prepared at first to concede only limited powers of self-government to the regions unless it was able to exercise, through its own officers, a close supervision of their work. The question of supervision and that of powers were thus closely interlinked.

This issue of supervision—the major issue in the drafting of a permanent local government law—was expressed most clearly in the sharp divisions of opinion which emerged as to what should be the character of the most important individual office in the whole local government system—the position of chairman of the local executive council, or regional head (*kepala daerah*) as it was termed. Should this be an elective office or not?

Under the pre-war Dutch experiments in decentralisation the establishment of regency and provincial councils had been balanced by the appointment, as chairman of the council, of the central government's chief executive officer in each region. The governor was chairman of the provincial executive council, the regent was chairman of the regency executive council, and the equivalent administrative official held a similar position in municipal councils. An appointed official who continued, of course, to perform his normal administrative tasks on behalf of the central government, was thus able to advise and supervise the elected members of councils. Law 22 of 1948 proposed a significant change in this system. It was recognised that a measure of supervision of local governments was likely to be required, and also that, if the central administrative service was to disappear, it would be convenient for the tasks of co-ordination and general administration to be centred in the hands of one individual. The regional head was the obvious person. At the same time, it was desired to make the regional head responsible to his councils—a servant of the local government and not a figure independent of it. In consequence, a compromise proposal was put forward to the effect that the regional head should be appointed by the central government from a list of, at the most, four candidates submitted by the regional representative council. The person thus chosen was to exercise a dual function. He was to be empowered to impose a temporary veto on any council measures which appeared to conflict with the general interest, and in using this power he would be acting on behalf of the centre. And yet in other matters he was intended to be the chief representative of his region. It was not a very satisfactory compromise. The centre could not rely, by this method, on getting a person suited, by training and experience, to watch its interests. And

#### EXPERIMENT IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

from the local government's point of view, the problem of divided loyalties would be likely to remain.

As it happened, though Law 22 was implemented in part, the central government in this matter relied on an escape clause in the Law, which enabled it to appoint directly to the office of regional head rather than from nominees put forward by the regional legislature. In availing itself of this emergency provision, it naturally appointed the appropriate members of its administrative service—governors as regional heads of provinces, *bupatis* of *kabupatens* and mayors of municipalities—who could be relied on by virtue of their training, experience and general tradition, to view local matters from the central government's own point of view. Thus, for the time being, a reversion to the pre-war practice enabled central interests to be safeguarded while the first steps were being taken in the establishment of councils, and the transferring to them of specified powers.<sup>4</sup>

The Ministry of Home Affairs, which was responsible for the drafting of a permanent law, was well satisfied with the workings of the provisional system, and would have liked to see it made permanent. An early draft, in fact, did propose, in straightforward terms, that the regional head should be a government official as he had been in colonial days and not a representative of the local government. When this proposal was found to be unacceptable to political opinion, a second draft agreed to the principle of straight-out election of the regional head. Under this draft he was to be chosen simply by vote of the representative council. But the same proposed measure included a plan for the general control of councils by representatives of the central government, who would themselves stand apart from the local government system, though they would possess statutory powers over it. There was to be a 'Commissioner' in each province, aided by appropriate officials at each of the lower levels of local government. The Commissioner and his assistants were clearly to be the old administrative service in a new guise. Once again party leaders in Parliament rejected the idea of external control by the centre over the exercise of local autonomy. Eventually the central government conceded the point at issue. Law 1 of 1957 provided for a regional head elected in the first instance by the representative council (the possibility of popular election was foreshadowed as a future method), and it dropped altogether the idea of a com-

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4. For the time being, councils were not elected but were appointed on the basis of a Government Regulation, which enabled a reasonable balance to be maintained as between contending political parties.

missioner. Provision was still made for central supervision, but its details were left vague, to be filled in later by Government Regulation. At the same time, a more generous distribution of local powers was given. Under Law 22 local governments, broadly speaking, could enjoy only those powers which were specifically transferred to them from above. The new law permitted them to deal with any matters not pre-empted by the centre or by higher local governments.

These concessions appeared to represent a defeat for the Ministry, and a victory for the regions in their demands for greater independence. However, it was not a clear defeat. Law 1 made no reference to the central administrative corps and, in effect, left open the question of its future. And the Ministry was now determined that, even though the idea of integrating this corps into the local government system had been rejected, the *pamong pradja* itself would not be allowed to disappear as at first planned. Instead it was more firmly convinced than ever that the corps should be retained for the normal purposes of central administration. As a corollary to this intention, it was assumed that a clearer division would be made between matters of regional concern and matters of central concern.<sup>5</sup>

In particular, it was assumed that part of the remaining responsibility of the centre would be the direct supervision of village affairs. During the provisional period, while councils had been established in provinces (first level) and in municipalities and regencies, or their equivalent (second level), the third level of autonomy based on villages had not been established. In the drafting of the permanent law, it was felt that the individual village was in any case too small a unit, and its traditional practices established too firmly by custom for its easy inclusion into a local government system. But the difficulties of effecting the amalgamation of village units, based essentially on custom, was clearly recognised. For these reasons, it was felt that the establishment of the lowest level of autonomy should be delayed, and Law 1 differed from its predecessor in that it merely allowed, but did not prescribe, three levels of autonomy. And until the third level was established, the oversight of the village would presumably rest, as it had done in the past, with the centre as represented through its territorial officers. Here lay a major concern of the Ministry of Home Affairs. The Ministry justified its reluctance to concede full autonomy to local governments partly by reference to the inexperience of local councils, and to their lack of preparation

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5. If the administrative corps was to be maintained, it would clearly be possible for the centre to use it, at least informally, to exercise a quiet oversight over local government activities, even though the basic local government law made no specific provision for this.

#### EXPERIMENT IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

to handle the task confronting them. But it also felt that local authorities, composed of representatives of political parties, could not be entrusted with the general oversight of the village. This argument was strengthened by the fact that the second level councils, which had been set up during the provisional period, did not, in fact, represent the agricultural population. They were composed not of farmers but of civil servants, teachers, traders, union leaders—of classes of people, that is to say, who had never belonged to the village, or who had become detached from their rural background, and who were representatives rather of Indonesian society in transition. One can overstress the closed and custom-bound character of village organisation. There were many degrees of 'de-traditionalisation'. But there were good reasons to make the Ministry reluctant to surrender full responsibility for the care and control of the rural population to councils which did not adequately represent the village.

The three major differences between Law 22 of 1948 and Law 1 of 1957 were thus intimately connected. The central government was concerned, amongst other things, with the task of what it called 'general government'. In a predominantly rural society this included its channel of communication to the base of society, the village. The centre was anxious, therefore, so long as third level governments had not been established, either to retain this channel of communication in its own hands, or to exercise a tight supervision over the general administration of local councils of the first or second levels. Parliament rejected the second alternative, and the Ministry of Home Affairs as a result proposed to fall back on the first by making a clearer definition of the fields of central and local responsibility respectively, and by withholding from local governments an important field of activity. This determination was clearly likely, at least in spirit, to run counter to the apparent enlargement of local powers which had been provided in the new law, and it was bound to arouse fresh opposition. With the decision to make the office of regional head elective, and to water down the powers of central supervision, the issue thus shifted to the question of the division of powers between centre and regions. This was a matter of policy to be fought out within the general framework of Law 1. In fact, the battle was lost by the centre.

#### III

Law 22 had provided simply that local governments could handle all matters of local concern—their 'household affairs'. The precise powers summed up in the term 'household affairs' were not enumerated in detail in the law; but it was provided that they would be

J. D. LEGGE

elaborated subsequently in the individual laws which were required actually to establish each region as a region of local government under the basic law. In due course, laws were passed to establish provinces, municipalities and *kabupatens* in Java and Sumatra, and they included a list of subjects which were regarded as belonging to the field of activity of local governments. The subjects—fifteen in all—included control of public lands, public works, control of agriculture and fisheries, control of handicrafts, control of labour, social welfare, public health and education. In some of these fields, local governments were to perform an auxiliary role only. Provinces and *kabupatens*, for example, were not intended to compete with the national Ministry of Education, and regional educational activities were to be subordinated to the general control of the Ministry. It was the task of the regions to provide and maintain school buildings. Curriculum matters remained in the Ministry's own hands. A region might have its own public health projects, or its plans of agricultural extension, but again, from a technical point of view, such plans fell under the general control of the central Ministry concerned.

The list appeared to be exclusive, and in fact local governments did not exercise powers not specifically transferred to them. Thus, Law 1, in giving any region the general right to deal with matters not already pre-empted by the central government or by higher levels of local government, appeared to represent a substantial enlargement of local authority. Obviously the more flexible wording would not mean very much if all important fields were, in fact, to be pre-empted by a higher authority. To make it abundantly clear that it was intended to make a substantial extension of local powers, the central government went beyond the general provision of the basic law and made a number of specific transfers of additional powers to the regions. Forestry, social welfare, labour, traffic control and housing were added to public works, agriculture and fisheries, veterinary services, control of small industries, education and health, which were already in provincial hands. On the face of it then, it would seem that, by 1957 central government generosity had gone as far as it could reasonably be expected to go, and there was no longer any real ground for the complaint that the regions had been denied a genuine scope for their activity. However there were certain peculiarities in the method of dividing powers which need to be noticed.

In spite of the broad concession of powers under Law 1, the old list of specific subjects which might be transferred to local authorities would still appear to be a correct reflection of both central and

#### EXPERIMENT IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

local thinking about what things a local government may properly do, and a consideration of the list must leave one with a feeling of bewilderment. An odd feature of it was the fact that the same subjects were allotted to all levels of local government—to provinces as well as to the smaller units within provinces. The actual responsibility of the province in any field was not intended, of course, to be the same as that of the *kabupaten*, and a more exact division of authority within a field of activity was provided in the appendix to each establishing law. Even so, it made for a very unwieldy distribution of power as between authorities of different size. It would seem reasonable to suppose that certain fields of activity are more suited to one level of government than to another, and for this reason alone, quite apart from the advantages of clarity and simplicity which would have followed, it might have been better to make a more exclusive division of functions, earmarking some fields for the centre, others for the first level of autonomy alone, and others again for the second and third levels. There are exceptions to the rule. Public Works is one sphere which must be divided amongst all levels, and no problem arises, for example, in making trunk routes the responsibility of the nation or the province, branch roads that of the *kabupaten*, and so on. Similarly, the field of public health is of such a character as to invite the co-operation of a multiplicity of public authorities. But does the same apply to the duties falling to the Ministry of Agriculture, or Social Welfare, or Labour, or Education? In these cases the idea that all levels of local government have a contribution to make means that there must be a hierarchy of detailed duties within the one broad field, matching the hierarchy of local governments themselves. To split up the field of Education, for example, allotting responsibility for curricula, teacher-training, etc., to one level, and the erection of buildings and provision of equipment to others, may conceivably be convenient, but on the face of it appears to be dictated less by convenience than by the desire to share powers on principle, as though the central government were saying 'If the regions want more power, here is one activity they may take over'.

The method of division is cumbersome. It is likely to mean that the lower levels of local government will, in fact, find themselves confined to a very subordinate role. And, in addition, it suggests some confusion as to just what local government should be. There is obviously a very big gap between the first level of autonomy and the rest. Provinces are large enough in area and population to merit complex governmental organisation. They are units which, though they happen to be established within the framework of a unitary state, could, in other circumstances, adapt themselves to

the role of constituent states. As such, the term 'local government' as it is commonly used is hardly applicable to this level. The situation is entirely different with other levels—districts, village groups and municipalities, even with large municipalities such as Surabaja. Governments at these levels are more clearly 'local governments', and their powers might well be defined accordingly. To put the matter bluntly, local governments, as the term is normally understood, are usually concerned with 'domestic' matters—with drains and suchlike. The Indonesian term 'household' is a good one. (This does not mean that the lower levels should not also be the arena of normal party competition. But in seeking office at the lower levels, the parties might be expected to concern themselves much more closely with immediate local issues.) To have too many levels, and to give all levels the power to participate in many of the same fields of activity, is to cut across this concept. It is also to place a heavy financial strain upon smaller governments, since many of these fields of activity require considerable outlay. Even if the funds should be provided by higher levels of government, it might be doubted whether the lower levels of administration would be capable of administering the large budget involved.

These remarks raise the whole question of the 'fullness' of local powers. The action on the part of the Ministry of Home Affairs during 1958 to effect further specific transfers was in line with its final concession to regional pressure. A consideration of the functions transferred, however, may leave some doubts as to whether, in their sum total, the additions really constituted a substantial addition to the actual autonomy of the governments in question. For that matter, it may be doubted whether, except at the first level of autonomy, it would even be possible to make a very substantial increase, as local governments, by their very nature, are limited in their powers. In Indonesia there has been a tendency to discuss the question as though this were not so—as though units at each level had it in them to become almost independent states, and as though all that was needed to meet local demands was the transfer of more and more functions. In fact, it could be argued, the control of more and more administrative functions does not make a local government unit essentially more powerful.

There was one field, however, in which the substance of power did appear to be genuinely at stake between centre and regions—the field termed 'general government', comprising that body of co-ordinating and other functions which were performed by the central administrative corps. The intention of the central government, after the passage of Law 1, to retain this corps for its own purposes, was

#### EXPERIMENT IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

seen by the advocates of fuller regional autonomy as an encroachment on the fuller powers which that Law had appeared to promise to the regions. During 1957, therefore, the battle centred on the role which the administrative corps was to play in the future. And just as the central government had been forced, during the drafting of Law 1, to accept the regional point of view on the nature of the position of the regional head, so it was finally persuaded to accept the regional point of view on the future of the *pamong pradja*.

Against the background of separatist tendencies in Sumatra and Sulawesi it was decided, after all, that steps would be taken to abolish the service by gradual stages. This decision, in effect, reverted to the general plan for regional autonomy which had been generally accepted in 1948 at the time of the passage of the original local government law. It was embodied formally in a Ministerial Regulation of December 5th, 1957, which laid down three phases through which the plan would be carried out. During the first phase the tasks of the *pamong pradja* were to be transferred gradually to the local authorities, but these authorities would receive help in the execution of their new responsibilities from members of the *pamong pradja*, who would, however, remain servants of the centre and who would, meanwhile, retain responsibility for central duties not yet transferred to the regions. The second phase would see the actual control of these activities by local government departments staffed by local officials. The third phase was one of stabilisation, in which central and local responsibilities would be clearly defined. Only three aspects of 'general government' would remain in central hands by this stage—control of police, co-ordination of the tasks of the several central government Ministries operating in the area, and the task of supervision of first level regional governments. And the responsibility for these tasks would no longer be that of the *pamong pradja*, but would be divided amongst other central departments. The initial steps in the direction of implementing the first phase of the plan and the beginning of the disbandment of the administrative service were taken quickly. They involved the transfer of *bupatis* (the officers in charge of *kabupatens*) to the office of the Resident. As vacancies occurred in the rank of *bupati*, they would not be filled. In the *kabupatens* the tasks which were still to be handled by a central official were to be taken over by the *patih*—the chief secretarial assistant to the *bupati*. While the latter, formally speaking, would possess the authority of a *bupati* for the time being, he would lack the prestige of the higher rank and he would, in effect, be merely a stand-in.

In the course of 1958 legislation was prepared to effect the

transfer to regional governments of the powers falling within the field of 'general government'. The power to issue regulations, conferred by a variety of instruments upon Governors and Residents, was to be transferred to the representative councils of first level local governments, and the executive powers of these officials, also deriving from a number of enactments, were to pass to the executive councils at that level. Similarly, the regulatory and administrative powers of *bupatis* were to be transferred respectively to the representative and executive councils of second level regions. As an interim step it was provided that servants of the central government would be attached to regional authorities to assist them in the exercise of their new tasks. Officials hitherto employed in the offices of Governors and Residents were to be attached to the first level region to which they belonged. At the municipal level similar arrangements were to be made, and other second level regions were to be assisted by officials of the *kabupaten* office and of the subordinate district and sub-district offices. The respective regions were to be required to accept these assistants, and were to refrain from making new appointments to their own services unless these inherited officials were all employed. The transferred officials were to remain national civil servants for the time being, however, and their salaries were to be financed by the centre in the form of subsidies to the regions concerned. But there was to be a provision for the actual absorption of these national servants by gradual stages into local services.

This draft measure, on the face of it, seemed intended, at one move, to yield the citadel: it purported to surrender the bulk of *pamong pradja* powers and functions to regional governments. An interesting feature of the Bill was its blanket character. The *pamong pradja* did not derive its existence or its character from any single enactment. Its duties had been built up gradually over the years, and a full definition of them was spread over some hundreds of individual enactments and regulations. There were some who argued that to dismember such a complex organism required delicate surgery, not a single blow from a blunt instrument. Specific powers should be transferred step by step and group by group in the form of amendments to specific regulations. It should be noted, of course, that while the emphasis of the Bill appeared to be on the general surrender of all except three reserved fields, the exceptions were equally important, and they, too, were described in the broadest terms: public order, co-ordination, and supervision. Much would depend on how these were interpreted. But by this stage the general intention of the central government seems to have been in the direction of meeting regional demands as fully as possible.

## EXPERIMENT IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### IV

Before this Bill passed into law the plan was interrupted by developments at the level of national politics, expressed in the adoption by Presidential Decree of the Constitution of 1945. It is, therefore, difficult to say with confidence how far the proposed transfer of central administrative powers would have contributed to the satisfaction of local discontent. But it is not without importance that, despite the more flexible wording of Law 1, the regions had not by the end of 1958 really assumed the responsibility of any new burdens. Their slowness to take advantage of their new freedom might have been partly a matter of inertia. But it is also possible that there was little genuine incentive to extend the duties of lower levels of local government. Law 1, in permitting regions a wider field of activity, and in allowing that field to be determined to a greater extent by the desires of the regions themselves, in effect put local governments on the spot, to the extent that their conflict with the centre was really about the fullness of local powers. Law 1, followed by the Ministerial Instruction of December 5th, 1957, and the preparation of the draft legislation to transfer *pamong pradja* powers, would seem to have constituted a central concession to regional demands. In fact, it may be wondered whether those demands were not themselves misleading. At least a part of regional complaints was not concerned with powers at all but with policies in matters which regions had never suggested should be the responsibility of any but the central government. The appropriateness of central economic policy, for example, was not viewed in the same light from Manado or Medan as it was from Djakarta, and regional complaints about injustice to producers as a result of exchange controls constituted a serious issue which could not be affected one way or another by changes in local government machinery or in local government powers.

This is the sort of question on which agreement must be sought by the new government, working within the framework of the new Constitution. For the time being attempts to remove regional discontent are likely, therefore, to be less preoccupied with forms and more with the content of policies than has been the case over the last nine years. On the institutional side it is certain that many of the concessions made by the centre in the direction of a fuller formal autonomy for the regions will be revoked. The transfer of *pamong pradja* powers is now unlikely to take place, and the service itself is almost certain to be retained. Guided democracy for the nation will presumably have its counterpart in guided democracy for the regions, and the obvious instrument for the guidance of local authorities lies ready to hand in the central administration corps.

## THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF GUIDED DEMOCRACY

J. A. C. MACKIE\*

INDONESIA'S ECONOMIC CHANGES OF 1958-9 mark a much more distinct turning point in the movement away from the postwar 'liberal' system than the political changes. This is somewhat paradoxical, since the substantive changes taking place do not derive specifically from the doctrine of 'Guided Democracy' (or its concomitant 'Guided Economy') as such. In fact nothing specific has been said about the form the 'guided economy' should take—certainly nothing to indicate an imminent and major overhaul of national economic policies. The President's utterances on economic matters have been much more indefinite than his political proposals. Yet as a result of the turbulent state of the economy in 1958-9, two important changes appear to have taken place. State-owned enterprise has been forced to play a much more dominant part in the national economy than it ever did in 1950-57, while the encouragement formerly given to 'national entrepreneurs' has been sharply reduced. (Importing had been the richest source of profits leading to capital formation by the embryonic Indonesian middle class, but their privileges in this activity have now greatly diminished.) In addition, the Army is now involved in the operation of taken-over Dutch enterprises and in supervising the distribution of essential goods. It thus becomes clear that the free scope for private enterprise has been much reduced. Some American, British and other foreign-owned private estates and commercial organisations remain, as well as the oil companies; but in the present political climate, the prospects for foreign investment in Indonesia now look much bleaker than they did before 1957.

Indonesia's economy between 1950 and 1957 was based essentially on private enterprise and retained a structure which differed only in minor respects from that of colonial times. There was a sharp dualism between the peasant economy of small-holdings and the foreign-owned plantations producing export crops. Small-holders produced a larger share of the export produce than before the war (particularly rubber and copra), but the prospects of substantially increasing their production were not bright. Importing and exporting business remained mainly in foreign hands, with the Dutch on the

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whole dominating the wholesale field and the Chinese the retail. State regulation of business was much more far-reaching than before the war, especially over foreign exchange transactions, where tight restrictions were now made necessary by constant pressure on the balance of payments and the fact that import controls were the most flexible, easy and effective instrument of economic regulation. But while these controls certainly had a far-reaching influence on the distribution of income, State enterprise in the productive field was limited to a very small sector—some public utilities, a few plantations which were bought out from the Dutch (allegedly not very profitable ones) and a handful of factories. Indonesian governments and parties all aimed at developing a much larger State sector of productive enterprise and if the development plans of 1950-57 had been carried through, public investment in productive enterprise would have become marginally more important than private. But for various reasons, initially the very bad business record of most State enterprises and later the general stagnation of economic development, this did not occur. As Professor Higgins has said, 'Whatever the government's attitude towards private investment the simple truth is that much of the responsibility for development is being left to the private sector'.

Thus, far from Indonesian governments in the 1950-57 period representing productive interests, the political situation was characterised by the anomaly that the export sector of the economy which was most easily controlled by government regulations was virtually not represented. Fundamentally, Indonesian governments represented consumers, so that even when there was some realisation that the long-run interests of the community depended on increasing production and allowing some scope to foreign enterprise, the more immediate pressures on governments were pushing them in the opposite direction. While it is an over-simplification to say that in such a situation a government could not succeed in maintaining conditions appropriate to a free-enterprise development policy, or that the type of development plan drafted in 1955 must have failed because of this political ambivalence, it is clear that only a strong government could have succeeded. But Indonesian governments have not in the past been strong enough to disregard the complex political and social pressures upon them; power is diffused between different agencies of government and pressure groups in society. The 1950-57 experiment could only have succeeded if the political and economic pressures had been pulling in the same direction, whereas the divorce between political and economic power (vague though the terms are) meant that they were pulling apart. The question today is whether

or not the changes which are bringing the State into closer association with the productive apparatus might remedy that fatal split.

It is now too late to put the clock back and hope that the free enterprise economy of 1950-58 could be made to work. Even one of the architects of the Five Year Plan, which presupposed continuation of the existing pattern, has admitted that it would not achieve its aims without a 'big push' entailing 'new attitudes, new behaviour patterns . . . basic decisions regarding the form of the economy and society, relations of Indonesia to the West, and the like'. In short, foreign capital. Now, however desirable this may be and however essential to achieve even the most modest rates of growth, it is clearly not politically practicable: we can easily give too much attention to the conditions under which Indonesian development *could* occur—too little to the relationship between property, politics and power which is likely to determine whether it *will* occur from within. One point that emerges very clearly from the upheaval of the past two years is that this relationship is changing significantly. The State is now a much greater owner (to all intents and purposes) of productive apparatus; it is also in a much weaker position to escape from the responsibility of balancing its budgets by allowing inflation of the 1957-59 magnitude. It may even try to raise a much greater share of the State revenue from the profits of public enterprises. In any event it is now in a more direct sense identified with the productive process and not a mere regulator of it; and by virtue of President Soekarno's promise to provide 'food and clothing' for the people, politically dependent on it.

It would be optimistic to conclude that there will therefore be a miraculous improvement in governmental efficiency or in production. But it will be less easy for governments to evade the consequences of financial irresponsibility; and anything that will force home to political authorities in Indonesia the need for better accounting will be preferable to the present laissez-faire arrangements where the bulk of taxation is indirect and the disbursement of revenue seems to bear little relation to economic reality. Deficit financing has been the curse of Indonesia's economy over the past decade, partly because it is inflationary at any time (though moderate, 'creeping' inflation might have been tolerable), but mainly because it enabled governments to avoid financial accountability. With rare exceptions, Indonesians (particularly the politicians) saw the problem of development as a matter of merely investing public funds rather than earning individual profits by increased production in a competitive economy: their mental orientations towards business and privately-earned wealth needed to be changed if an essentially capitalist development

#### POLITICAL ECONOMY OF GUIDED DEMOCRACY

plan of this kind was to work. Financial discipline has been appallingly lax and in view of the pressure of rising prices on the low civil service salaries, the corruption and misdirection of funds which has taken place is hardly surprising. There are only a handful of well-trained accountants, most of them Chinese. Accounting procedures in the government service are so ineffective that the relation between budget estimates and actual outlays is extremely loose: at best only broad provisional outlay figures are published and there is nothing like a Treasury check or Parliamentary accounts committee to ensure adherence to the budget. In effect, financial responsibility is the affair of each Ministry and the Finance Ministry is able to do little more than control the issue of funds at the source. If government expenditures had been limited to the amounts that could be raised by taxation, they would have had to tighten up their disbursements or increase taxation. Draconian retrenchment would have been necessary, since the scope for increasing taxes is not great: nearly half of government revenue comes from taxes on imports, but already the opportunities for taxation there had been very largely taken up. Direct taxation should be higher, particularly in the agricultural sector, but it is not easy to collect small sums from large numbers of individual peasants with the present machinery of tax collection.

The Djuanda cabinet's policy towards inflation deserves attention as an example of how far governments can ignore it. Because of the security situation, deficits rising from a rate of Rp. 6 milliard in 1957 to well over Rp. 9 milliard by 1959 have been allowed to accumulate, while little attempt was made to raise revenue in other ways. (A more determined effort to do so has been noticeable since the August 1959 devaluation.) Up to 1956, deficits had rarely risen above Rp. 1.5 milliard per annum and even a gradual rise in the money supply (due mainly to deficits) from Rp. 7-12 milliard in 1954-55 was considered dangerous: between 1957 and mid-1959 it rose from Rp. 13-30 milliard. Fortunately for the government, there was not an immediate or spiralling race of money after goods: hoarding was very common, since conspicuous wealth was subject to investigation. Nonetheless there was great pressure on imports and after an unsuccessful experiment in letting the demand for supply of foreign exchange reach a natural level, the government adopted virtually direct controls on imports. Previously, the choking off of demand for imports had been left to taxes; now it was regulated by refusing or delaying applications, which were periodically rejected in toto when the demand became too heavy. Industry was severely disrupted by the disturbed flow of raw materials and by late 1958

prices began to rise sharply as consumer goods like textiles simply disappeared. However, exports held up surprisingly well until late 1958 and, despite the disruption of commerce due to the take-over of Dutch enterprises in December 1957, rose steadily throughout 1958, so that the annual total was only 20 per cent below that for the previous (fairly good) year.

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Indonesian economic policy since the takeover of Dutch businesses in December 1957 has already been hardened by the exigencies of maintaining the balance of payments by direct controls. The most important single measure taken has been a decision to entrust 75 per cent of the most important categories of imports to the government-controlled 'Big Eight' business enterprises, which included the former Dutch 'Big Five' import houses. This confined the national importers to a very unpromising segment of the market. From the remarks of several ministers that the number of national importers should be radically reduced, it can hardly be doubted that their day in the sun is over; of the 4,000 or so national importers registered, only between five and eight hundred are believed to have succeeded in establishing themselves in any way and that number is expected to drop to 100. It may not have been a coincidence that it was shortly after the decision to push the national entrepreneurs out of the importing sphere that the Ministry of Trade announced that foreign (i.e. Chinese) shops would not be permitted to operate in rural districts and small towns after the end of 1959. This Ministry at least may have been intending to create opportunities for the national businessmen at lower levels in recompense for the reduction of their share of major importing business; the social benefit of protection of national enterprise at lower levels would be much greater, despite the hardships and disruption involved in the change, and the policy is no more than a reversion to a rule applied by the Dutch until 1910. The national businessmen have been apprehensive over the last year that their opportunities would diminish in a 'guided economy' despite the very vague terms in which it has been depicted. They have come in for a good deal of criticism recently and despite the shortcomings of public enterprise in Indonesia, the government prefers it to private enterprise as an instrument for transacting the business of the former Dutch firms; and indeed it is hard to see any alternative.

A second development which may prove far-reaching is the encouragement of self-governing 'syndicates' of all firms in an industry as instruments for regulating matters like the distribution of raw materials and other dealings with the government. The

arguments advanced in favour of these organisations were that they would make it easier for the government to allocate supplies between a small number of syndicates, which could be made responsible for any rationing necessary, rather than to many individual firms; that they would help to check speculative over-importing of raw materials; and that it would be more profitable for the members if the syndicate operated in the market as a 'single-seller' and 'single-buyer'. The *Madjelis Industri* (Chamber of Manufacturers) has supported formation of syndicates because they give it quasi-governmental powers and a sanction over non-members; it takes little imagination to see that the system could easily be abused to the disadvantage of efficient or unpopular firms, but under present circumstances this degree of industrial self-government may be preferable to other forms of control. In the industrial field, at any rate, private enterprise is less likely to incur the hostility or competition of the State than in fields where it is more solidly entrenched.

The expansion of the State-owned sector through the acquisition of the Dutch estates and import-export firms in Djakarta sounds alarming when the generally dismal record of public enterprise in Indonesia between 1950 and 1958 is recalled. Business efficiency is not learned in a day and the loss of accumulated managerial experience and efficiency on the agricultural estates must be felt in the long run, even if past momentum keeps the enterprises running for the present. But some tightening of government financial discipline in public enterprise seems unavoidable. If all or many of the enterprises now under State control suffer losses which have to be borne by the budget, or if the production of export crops declines, the central government is immediately affected, to a much greater degree than in the past. Losses carried into the State budget can only be met by taxes or by deficits, which will merely intensify inflationary pressures. There is no over-riding reason why the new cabinet should not acquiesce in inflation as deliberately as the last cabinet appears to have done, but there are several reasons for believing that inflation would now snowball to another point of crisis so much more quickly than in the two years between the 1957 devaluation and the 1959 combined 'monetary purge' and devaluation that it could not be suffered. Stocks of commercial goods in the country are now very low, whereas they were very high in 1957 after two years of imports running at nearly Rp. 9 milliard per annum: in 1958-59 the rate has been down near Rp. 5 milliard and can only rise if exports rise. Moreover, after the 'monetary purge', people's willingness to hold large sums of currency in hoards, which was definitely an effective damper to the mounting inflation of 1958, is likely to

have disappeared: money will be chasing goods more desperately—and it cannot now be locked up in import prepayments as before, since so much of the import sector is confined to State enterprise.

The government has thus lost some of its flexible indirect instruments for staving off the consequences of deficits. It is also, through its control of much plantation enterprise, directly responsible for export production in some of the most important sectors and would be doubly affected if exports fell, since any hopes of profiting directly from the estates would disappear and the revenue siphoned off through taxes on imports and on foreign exchange earnings likewise. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that unless the government can in some unprecedented way maintain the efficiency as well as the output of the taken-over enterprises, it will soon collapse into a new economic crisis, which would probably drive regional military commanders to control the external trading relations of their provinces. Even without such a crisis, it now appears inevitable that supervision of the new State enterprises must be entrusted very largely to military commanders to exercise in whatever ways they find most suitable.

The military authorities already carry out a very large measure of control over economic life in their capacities as War Administrators under Martial Law—most specifically through their powers to control prices and the distribution of goods. For example, during a period of acute textile shortage in East Java last June, at a time when the March regulations pegging prices to the levels of December 1958 were still in force, the War Administrator for the area conferred with the local traders about restoration of the flow of goods in the market and virtually agreed to permit a price rise on their assurance that they would thereupon obtain the necessary goods from Djakarta. Again, after the monetary depreciation in late August, he conferred with bank officials, businessmen and representatives of government departments concerning relaxation of the credit restrictions to firms facing liquidity crises and the extent of his relaxations seems to have almost negated the deflationary purpose of the original measure. At another time he regulated the sugar distribution for the province through a system of monopoly wholesalers in each district. As the Dutch estates and enterprises taken over in 1957 all had military officers assigned to them to supervise their continued operation, the extent of military concern with the economic functions of the regions can be seen to constitute one of the most far-reaching changes from the 1950-58 regime. In Djakarta, Colonel Suprajogi sits in the Inner Cabinet as Minister for Production and he appears to have been one of the chief advocates of the switch in policy against the national businessmen.

#### POLITICAL ECONOMY OF GUIDED DEMOCRACY

The military authorities are therefore involved in the financial and economic affairs of their region to an extent which puts them in a quite different position from that before 1957, when their responsibility did not go beyond keeping an eye on smuggling and when large-scale productive enterprise was in foreign hands. Now the efficiency of production is more directly their concern and is likely to affect the welfare of their region. If things go wrong they will certainly feel the displeasure of the local population more keenly, as well as that of their senior officers in Djakarta. They are thus likely to become more closely identified with the 'interests' of the province (in a Burkian sense) whether by private arrangements which discreetly rely upon the local entrepreneurs, or through their domination of the various control bodies on which they are represented. The institutional arrangements are likely to be tortuous and complicated, the appearance often conflicting with reality, their methods perhaps heavy-handed. (The Indonesian addiction to collegiate boards, consultation, consensus, *musjawarah* provides a flexible basis for establishing channels of identification.) But whatever actual forms of organisation may be devised from one region to another, the local War Administrators must now become more directly interested advocates of their regions in dealings with the central government. If they become dissatisfied with their treatment from the centre, they will be tempted to permit smuggling to provide the extra revenues they need, and nothing is more likely than that to tie them in a bond with the regional producers. In 1957, it constituted the principal threat of economic disintegration through defiance of the central government. The proved strength of central military power (and possibly greater power to control smuggling) makes it less likely that the threat would now be as severe. Indonesia's economic unity is tougher than many people anticipated in 1957. But it is difficult to see how the practical effect of central government financial policies can be any other than reliance on decentralised direct controls through government-controlled enterprises, 'syndicates' and military supervision rather than centralised indirect controls largely concentrated on foreign trade.

## INDONESIAN LITERATURE AND THE SOCIAL UPHEAVAL

A. H. JOHNS\*

THE RELATION OF literature to life is complex and frequently misleading. In consequence any attempt to place the development of modern Indonesian literature in the context of current social and political development within Indonesia is perilous, if not impossible without attempting to force on it some type of neo-Marxist sociology; and even then it would take little for the mass of material involved to gyrate wildly out of control.

Yet it is not a coincidence that a modern Indonesian literature in poetry as well as prose, has developed parallel to the growth of an Indonesian National consciousness. By modern, we mean that the work in question is the product of an individual; the author puts his name to it as if to say: this is my contribution to the world of letters; this expresses something that is a vital part of the individual that is myself. In form, subject, treatment and the concomitant attitudes it involves, the work is individual and not an anonymous part of the traditional way of life. In the second place it is to be read privately, not listened to as part of a social function; it is not an object for group participation, but for private and individual stimulus and response. Thirdly—at least in regard to the novel—the norm is formal realism: the subject matter is the world as it is in all its aspects; and its core resides in the creation of character, the predicaments of individuals, the complexities of their motives, and the tensions and animosities implicit in their mutual relationships. Traditional literature, on the other hand, is anonymous; it has a social function, and portrays the type rather than the individual; further, it uses to the full all the licence of mythology.

It is not difficult to see a parallel between these characteristics of modern literature as we have defined them, and the philosophy of the individual on which the organization of the modern state rests, where individual loyalty, basically, is to the nuclear family and nation, rather than to the extended family or clan and regional area. And it is this situation that we find illustrated in the structure of individual units which constitute British suburbia.

The development of the nationalist movement in Indonesia was in part due to the liberation of the potentialities of the individual from

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#### INDONESIAN LITERATURE

the ties of the communal village structure which normally formed an effective obstacle to individual ambitions. This liberation became possible through the dislocation of the traditional way of life resulting from new methods of production, distribution, exchange and western education. And because economic relations cut across those of the village or clan, the individual was forced to look beyond the village horizon; in his new-found awareness of himself as an individual, he needed a new focus for his loyalties which the state would provide.

General considerations such as these are a convenient point of departure for the discussion of a relation between the development of a modern Indonesian literature, and the rise of Indonesia as a modern state.

Broadly speaking, the Indonesian novel shows a clear line of development, reflecting the shifting patterns of social emphasis during the pre-war years. The novels of the early '20's frequently illustrate the points at which the western impact on Indonesian society was most felt—the organization of family life, and its regulation by *adat* or traditional law. The area where the resulting conflict was most keenly felt was that of Minangkabau in Central Sumatra. The greater part of the writers of the '20's came from that area, and the stories they wrote give a clear picture of the tension between the older and younger generations and the opposition between western education and traditional values. Above all, the best of them expose the loss of moral values in the traditional society as manifest in the exploitation of women and hypocrisy in religion.

But in 1928 appeared a novel set in a broader framework, *Salah Asuhan* (The Wrong Soil) by Abdul Muis. The tension between East and West is still there, but the central theme of the book, and its emphasis, is the problems an inter-racial marriage has to face in a colonial society. The theme has universal possibilities, and the book not only has considerable literary merit, but illustrates effectively the consequences of Dutch social policy.

In 1936 Takdir Alisjahbana's *Lajar Terkembang* (With Spreading Sails) illustrates a further development of awareness and self-confidence on the part of Indonesian writers. The theme is the struggle of a free individual to renovate the foundations of social life and to infuse a spirit of dynamism into society without which, in Alisjahbana's view, Indonesians would never be able to meet the rest of the world on equal terms.

However, the Indonesian novel did not come of age by international standards until the publication of Armijn Pane's *Belenggu* (Bond-

age) in 1940. This is a novel of sophisticated urban life, a study of the growing tension between a doctor, his socialite wife, and the other woman. The core of the problem lies within the characters of the protagonists themselves, not in the pressure of their physical environment or fate. For the first time too, there is a genuine harmony between the *dramatis personae* and the environment in which they are set. The Djakarta in which they live comes alive and is not just a back-cloth against which they play their parts.

This very brief survey is sufficient to show some aspects of the merits of the pre-war writers: not only in expressing the predicaments of their society, but also, as the conscience of their generation, pointing out the need for a re-orientation of life and giving a clothing of flesh to at least some of the problems involved in the confrontation of east and west. The government publishing house would not accept works with a political flavour, but writers frequently assumed that there was a united Indonesia with Djakarta as its capital in which the Dutch figured only incidentally, and often unpleasantly. Thus even in the narrow limits open to them, they played an important part in the development of a national consciousness, and fertilized the growth of the national language, Bahasa Indonesia.

The years 1920-40 showed a steady increase in confidence and ability on the part of Indonesian writers, and a maturity and sophistication of theme and treatment in the novel, the short story, poetry and essay. Yet these twenty years were not only a period of experimentation in writing, they were also years of intellectual exploration: an attempt to discover and formulate a rational basis for the development of a modern Indonesian national culture as opposed to the traditional regional cultures. And the pages of *Pudjangga Baru* (a cultural periodical founded in 1933) served as a forum where creative writers and intellectuals discussed, often heatedly, the sources from which their new culture might be drawn and the direction they wished its development to take. There were some who argued for a whole-hearted acceptance of western attitudes, others looked toward India and yet others looked into Indonesia's own past for their inspiration and guidance for the future.

The Japanese occupation, and all it involved, created the conditions for a new type of literature. It forced a psychological as well as a physical break with the past. To the Indonesians it brought for a short time the exhilaration of freedom, but only too soon became an oppressive tyranny under which destitution, famine and bereavement were commonplace. The new generation of writers who had lived through the demoralisation and suffering of the occupation con-

#### INDONESIAN LITERATURE

sidered the older generation smug, ignorant, and lacking in any effective awareness of the outside world.

Chairil Anwar, the most characteristic writer of the new generation, later to be known as the 'Generation of '45', complained bitterly: 'If we look back, we find that *Pudjangga Baru*, born in the year that Hitler seized power in Germany printed only one shallow article on Fascism throughout the course of its history. Its founders were dedicated to "renewal" but their use of the word was meaningless because they lacked any foundation of literary knowledge in the broadest sense'. By contrast the new generation, inspired by such slogans as Universal Humanism and Human Dignity, considered itself the heir to the culture of the whole world, a culture for it to develop in its own way. If the older generation regarded literature as a mirror of society, these regarded it as a telescope: an instrument of relentless observation and analysis. Elsewhere Chairil remarks: 'The young poets who are to come must be meticulous in observation, prepared to strip and cut until they reach the innermost reality. Everything, everything that comes to their hand must submit to the penetration of their glittering knife; everything, even the sacred *waringin*.' And further: 'We do not want conventional portraits, but to penetrate with X-ray eyes even to the bone marrow'. Another feature of their poetry was extreme compression and economy of diction, as if life and experience were so precious that the maximum significance had to be forced into every word and phrase.

During the Dutch interregnum, there was a reaction against the universal humanism of the principal members of the Generation of '45. A. S. Dharta claims that for the most part they rode on the revolutionary band-wagon without any content in their works to justify their claim to the title: 'While the Indonesian people were the victims of class division, their society full of contradictions, poverty and hunger wide-spread and the rich corrupt and parasitic, the Generation of '45 were individualist and anarchist, isolated from the life of the masses and taking no part in the nationalist struggle'. Whereas their duty was: 'To use literature as an instrument to expose the moral collapse of society, to urge every level of the people to unite, to create an awareness of, and to sing the strength and glory of the masses.' This distinction between the tendency to *l'art pour l'art*, and *l'art engagee* roughly coincided with the division between those writers within the areas occupied by the Dutch, and those within the area held by the Republic who insisted on a total commitment to the revolutionary struggle. And indeed there was more than a suspicion that 'Universal Humanism' was used by the Dutch as a

tool to weaken nationalist determination. H. B. Jassin—on the whole the most balanced of critics—has some comments on the functioning and orientation of the literary periodical *Gema Suasana* founded in Djakarta in January 1948. 'Several of the foremost writers of the Generation of '45,' he remarks, 'were represented on the editorial board: Asrul Sani, Chairil Anwar and Rivai Apin with several Dutchmen behind the scenes, including (apparently) van Plas'. Among its aims was to create universal brotherhood. Jassin adds: 'It is not that I have any objection to the dedication to humanity and progress implicit in the periodical *Gema Suasana*, but it was premature, and what is unforgivable is that the Dutch deliberately propagated this spirit of humanism as a part of their policy to resubjugate Indonesia. Only six numbers appeared with our colleagues on the editorial board, and during this period they were always at odds with the leadership behind the scenes. Eventually they all resigned, and strengthened the editorial board of *Gelanggang*, the supplement to the weekly *Siasat* introduced in March 1948.' Teeuw comments that *Gema Suasana* (later *Gema*) produced little original writing in Bahasa Indonesia, and if anything, somewhat resembled a digest of international culture for the benefit of Indonesians. It expired in 1950, shortly after the transfer of sovereignty. In April 1950 the group associated with *Gelanggang* issued their profession of faith: 'We are the legitimate heirs of the culture of the whole world, a culture that is ours to develop in our own way'. And this was answered in August by the foundation of the *Lembaga Kebudajaan Rakjat* (Institute of Culture for the People). The prologema to its constitution began: 'In cognisance of the fact that the People are the one and only source for the creation of a culture, and that a new Indonesian culture can only be created by the people, on the 17th day of August 1950 was founded the *Lembaga Kebudajaan Rakjat*'. It described its cultural aims as 'art for the people' or 'creative realism', a combination of 'critical realism' and 'romantic revolutionism'.

Thus it should be clear that the literary scene in Indonesia is considerably complex. In addition to the basic ideological differences, almost all the European literary movements of the last 50 years, realism, naturalism, romantic idealism, impressionism, expressionism *et cetera!* have some kind of following. And a random glance at any leading Indonesian cultural periodical will show discussions of and translations from Zola, Chekov, Anouilh, Gide, Sartre, Camus and Dostoyevsky, and many others. It is important to realize, moreover, that Indonesia has only been open to world literature for fourteen years; and if one considers, by way of contrast, the time taken for

#### INDONESIAN LITERATURE

the assimilation of Western literary ideas in Japan, the speed and depth of the Indonesian literary development has been remarkable.

Modern Indonesian literature is at its best in the short story, poetry and the essay. There have been some very good novels, but if it is an exaggeration to say that they can be counted on the fingers of one hand, it is an exaggeration not far removed from the truth. But their maturity in theme and treatment is impressive. Perhaps the most striking single work is *Atheis* (An Atheist) by Achdiat Karta Mihardja, which analyses the mental torment suffered by a man rent between the new world and the old; *Djalan Tak Ada Udjung* (A Road with No End) by Mochtar Lubis, in which the central figure discovers his integrity as an individual through torture in a Dutch prison; and *Tambera* (Tambera is a boy's name) by Utuy Sontani, a historical novel set in Banda in the 17th century at the beginning of the Dutch penetration, and which is, among other things a remarkable study of the development of character during adolescence; then there are the novels of Pramudya Ananta Tur, principally dealing with the revolution, which are in a class of their own.

This paucity of works of epic quality in length, subject and treatment has led to questionings and self-examination among many Indonesian intellectuals. One of the results of this self-examination was the burial of *Pudjangga Baru* in 1952 and the birth of *Konfrontasi* (Encounter) in its place. The aim it set itself was to effect a kind of national stock-taking, a study of the cultural factors involved in Indonesian economic reconstruction, and an attempt to assess the position of Indonesia in regard to India, Europe, America, Islam, Communism and its own past; to illuminate the essential quality of these cultures, the form in which they presented themselves to Indonesia, and the manner in which different aspects of them could be accepted and absorbed into Indonesian life.

A major essay by Sudjatmoko in the first number is a discussion of the 'crisis' in Indonesian literature—the crisis being a failure to produce works on a grand scale referred to above. In effect it is an attempt to find a reason for a loss of verve in Indonesian national development after the successful revolution to which he relates the crisis in literature. In a different essay in the same periodical he discusses 'Economic Development as a Cultural Problem'; the ways in which the Indonesian cultural heritage, if left unadapted, impede the development of Indonesia as a modern industrialised state.

It is not the intention of this essay to discuss in general terms, or attempt to put a name to the Indonesian political situation over the past five years. The important question from our standpoint is: Is

there in fact a relation between this and Indonesian literary development? Sudjatmoko, and he is representative of a fair number of intellectuals, argues that there is: 'We are still bound to the short story. The short stories produced have some merit, but we are still waiting for works of major calibre. . . . A short story unfolds in a small environment, and is limited to the psychology of an individual. Is the problem then a matter of shortness of breath, an inability to handle major themes (e.g. the dramatic element implicit in our revolution, basic questions involving humanity and society)? Our impression is that the literary renaissance in all forms of literature, the embodiment of the new life of Indonesia, has not been able to sustain and renew itself. The Generation of '45 has expended itself and fissured into small groups, isolated from the community.' This Sudjatmoko claims is due to a failure to face up to basic problems through lack of courage and determination: 'In reality, the political crisis is exactly parallel to that which we see in literature and culture. The symptoms are the same: weakness, confusion, loss of confidence and a sense of values. The overall picture is one of arrested national development, stagnation, lack of purpose and disintegration. . . . We need to inculcate a radical change of attitude among our people: in respect of trade, money, savings, a sense of time, a new attitude towards the social hierarchy, towards rank and status, towards hand and machine work. This change necessitates the capacity to think quantitatively and requires a mode of thought and action in an organisational connection larger than before, and which extends beyond the family organisation. This demands a different tempo of life, and is a cultural problem in the widest sense of the word.'

The analysis is penetrating and incisive. But is the pattern really as clear cut as this, and is the implication of social determinism, at least in respect of literature, valid in any absolute sense?

Pramudya Ananta Tur, on the other hand, has nothing less than contempt for the opinions and analyses of western orientated writers such as Takdir Alisjahbana and Sudjatmoko, claiming that the notion of crisis is an invention of H. B. Jassin, which has been taken up and echoed by the 'salon critics' who have written themselves out and have nothing more to offer. This divergence reflects a deep cultural cleavage between those whose outlook and approach is wholly western—not only in literature, but in their attitude to Indonesian development—and those who subscribe to the principle: art for the people—the Indonesian people. The difference is not only of opinion but of mental outlook. If on the one hand there is penetrating intellectual analysis, on the other there is a passionate emotional

commitment—to Indonesia. This may be associated with Marxism, but not necessarily or inevitably so. It is the cultural gulf between the international orientation of the 'We are the legitimate heirs to the culture of the whole world' school, and those who believe that all art must be created by the People—the Indonesian People. And it is this cultural tension that lies at the heart of the Indonesian predicament at the present time. These two groups cannot make contact with each other. The Western orientated intelligentsia cannot understand the passionate emotionalism of their colleagues, because the western liberal intellectual type of analysis is impotent before this intensity, and finds it difficult to understand the commitment to Indonesian values on which it is based. Yet the latter cannot come to grips with the technical problems of planning and cultural re-orientation involved in the re-organization and development of Indonesian society. Both sides are frustrated and exacerbated feelings result. Writers such as Pramudya and Dharta (*Klara Akustia*) have a vivid awareness of the appalling problems history has imposed upon their country. Its society has been split culturally more than any other, partly the result of Dutch educational policy; its people have endured more physical and mental suffering than those of any other newly independent Asian nation as a result of the Japanese occupation, and four years of bitter struggle against the Dutch—a struggle not only against armed force and economic blockade, but also against cultural subversion, as was indicated in the account of the literary periodical *Gema Suasana*. And the struggle claimed the lives of a large proportion of what few highly qualified people there were in the country. Despite occasional gestures of great nobility, as from Australia in 1947-8, their country has received no consistent, sympathetic understanding from the Western countries and not one generous gesture on the part of the Dutch government, which on the contrary has gone to all lengths to keep a remnant of its empire. Even foreign aid experts, in some cases, have formed a new elite in Indonesian society, living on a scale so far removed from Indonesian life as to make a normal social contact impossible.

In addition there are the emotional pressures of the cold war—although this has not created the situation—leading to the *l'art pour l'art*, internationalist, pro-western, anti-communist orientation on the one hand, and *l'art engagée*, art for the people, nationalism, and neutralism or communism on the other. Yet even the tendency to communism is more a result of the attraction of the ideal pattern of the traditional way of life, and thus an instinctive, emotional loyalty to Indonesia, its people and its traditional values, than a rabid espousal of Marxist Leninism.

It is such considerations as these which are part of the backcloth to the dislocation in Indonesian social and political life. They are part of the frustration, bitterness, disappointment and corruption, inefficiency and loss of morale that disfigures so much of Indonesian public life—although by no means all—and which lies behind the growth of the communist party, chauvinistic nationalism and the unspeakable, inutterably crushing weight of hopelessness which rests on the shoulders of so many, nationalists and internationalists alike.

Yet there is still a tremendous amount of literary activity, particularly in the essay and short story. The quality is uneven, but the effort, the searching is there. The greatest single problem in the development of a characteristically modern Indonesian literary culture is the limited public to whom writers can appeal. The number to whom reading is attractive as a serious use of leisure, which is quite another thing than literacy, is still very small, and the number prepared to subscribe regularly to serious literary periodicals is even smaller. There is a reasonable chance that with the spread of education the number of intelligent and critical readers will increase, but if one considers the decline in reading habits among the British, Americans and Australians, the outlook is not too promising. One of the finest modern Indonesian novels *Atheis* (An Atheist) has gone through rather less than three impressions of 5000 copies since it first appeared in 1949. The lack of leisure—since a person of the class most likely to enjoy reading has to work at at least two different jobs to make ends meet—is an important factor too. It would be difficult to find many people with the time to read a book the length of *Middlemarch*, or a writer who could devote enough time to a single work without facing starvation. But Indonesian writers, in the media in which they are expert, are still the conscience of the middle-class—such as it is—and the intelligentsia. And several writers have written searing exposures of the corruption and disillusion of the times. Utuy Sontani, in a collection of short stories has etched in acid different aspects of the loss of morale: the enthusiastic night-watchman who at first accepts his responsibility with pride, having a part to play in his country, newly independent, only to find that he is the only member of his group prepared to stay at his post, or even to stay awake. At two a.m. the first night he goes home to bed disgusted with the whole situation—having missed supper for his pains. Or the boy from the desa who comes to Djakarta hoping to earn his living. At first he takes out prayer books to sell at the bus station; there is no market for these so he offers pictures of the president. But prices rise and the market drops. Being a boy of

initiative he offers pictures of nude women at the bus station and finds that his income rises sufficiently to keep pace with the cost of living. Achdiat Karta Mihardja in a collection of short stories published in 1956 exposes pitilessly the complacency, arrogance and pathetic emptiness of those riding on the band waggon of the cry: Moral Crisis; the inconsequence and lack of purpose of so-called leaders, the pathetic lot of peasants displaced by Dar al-Islam terrorists entering Djakarta with a trust in their government, the fathers of the people, to find only destitution. Pramudya writes a short story in the form of advice to a man going to find a livelihood in Djakarta, warning him of the corruption and hopelessness there, advising him to remain at home to develop his own province.

Thus it is impossible to say that Indonesian literature is in a state of arrest or decline directly attributable to the present political situation. If one takes 1940 as the year of the birth of a modern Indonesian novel, 19 years is simply not a sufficient length of time to point out any long term trend or tendency—particularly since a whole new world of literary possibilities has opened so suddenly before Indonesian writers. In any case there is no necessary correlation between literary productivity and 'the state of the nation'. Jane Austen wrote at a time when the English nation was in difficult circumstances, standing at the beginning of the industrial revolution, and in the midst of war with Napoleon, but she was able to pack infinite riches in a little room. Genius is unpredictable.

If there has been no quantitative development of the Indonesian novel (qualitatively there has been), the reasons are probably to be looked for elsewhere. As we mentioned earlier, the reading public for the novel as a serious art form is still extremely small. Pramudya moreover claims that publishers are unwilling to take risks on doubtful ventures, and prefer to rely on contracts from the Ministry of Education. But there is another factor at a deeper level. Perhaps the explanation is to be found in an over-awareness of the necessities of the novel: a realisation that the novel as a serious art form, involves the writer in a struggle to probe ever deeper into the motives and patterns of human life, and to organise the results of his analysis in a way that remains true to life; there is an awareness of the technical problems grappled with by Joyce and Lawrence, and what they were trying to achieve. As Edwin Muir remarks: 'To the novelist of fifty or a hundred years ago, life obediently fell into the mould of a story; to the novelist of today it refuses to do so.' And in another essay he adds: 'The writers of this century have certainly been troubled by the problem of an era of transition; but it is clear that they have also been troubled by the desire to convey

A. H. JOHNS

a new sense of experience.' And this is precisely the problem faced by the Indonesian novelist. In a sense he is suffering from a too rapid growth. At one leap he has by-passed the winding highways and by-ways as well as the highlights of the development of the novel in Europe, and is faced with the immense problems facing the mid-20th century novelist seeking a new means of individual expression—but without a tradition of 200 years behind him with its experiments, successes, and inevitably, failures.

Yet the present social situation in Indonesia and its past, immediate as well as distant, offer vast opportunities, canvases on the grandest scale for the novelist. And it may well be the provinces rather than the sophisticated capital which will produce the great novels of the future. In any case, the literary situation of today has more the signs of hope for a better tomorrow than of stagnation and defeat.

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## STRATEGIC GEOGRAPHY AND THE NORTHERN APPROACHES<sup>1</sup>

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THIS PAPER ESSAYS an introductory analysis of some of the geo-political aspects of Australian relations. It is primarily concerned with the concept of the 'Safety Zone' which underlies so much of Australian thinking on foreign policy, and the main arguments are sketched only in outline. The concept of the safety zone has been outlined by Levi in his *Australia's Outlook on Asia* (p. 22), as a region surrounding the continent, and particularly in the islands of the immediate neighbourhood, in which no foreign power must be permitted to gain influence. The need for such a zone still has a potent influence on our thinking on international problems.

In its political geography the basic fact about Australia is that it is an island. The strategic importance of this fact needs constant reiteration, because we appear to be obsessed with the notion that Australia is part of Asia; that our location makes us peculiarly susceptible to pressures originating from the greater continent. In this we are being somewhat egocentric. Our main centres of population in the south-east, are as far removed from the main centres of Asia as Europe is from North America, and are further from China than are the relatively thinly populated wheat fields and the concentration of mineral wealth of Western Siberia. We are separated from mainland Asia by a threefold barrier to easy human movement . . . by our own deserts, by the sea, and by distance. It would be difficult to assess the relative importance of these barriers, but it seems that in purely logistical terms distance is probably the greatest. The consideration of these factors should give modest comfort to the ten millions facing the fourteen hundred millions.

Like England during the centuries of national struggles in Europe, Australia can only be brought to heel, at the last resort, by the country that controls the sea. The matter of sea power should, therefore, always be in the background of our consciousness. Control of the sea, and of the skies over the sea, alone made possible the deployment of Japanese power as far south as our northern coastline. And the construction of an unprecedented armada of fighting and service vessels made possible the American attack which finally

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1. Based on an address to Section 'P', A.N.Z.A.A.S., Perth Meeting, 1959.

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resulted in the defeat of Japan. Clearly, Australia is not sufficiently strong on her own account to command the sea. Clearly, too, in the present state of military technology, the only country with such strength is the United States of America.

The desert, the third component of our natural defence barrier, is Australian. In military terms it is not confined only to the area with a rainfall under ten inches, but extends over all parts of the continent in which human settlement is slight or absent. This means not only the interior, but also the entire broad belt between the interior and the warm seas to the north. 'The greatest barrier to human movement' it has been said, 'is the lack of human beings.' This applies in war as in peace. With specific reference to Australia R. H. Greenwood has emphasized the importance of this consideration in his article, 'The Challenge of Tropical Australia' in *Pacific Affairs*, 1956. Greenwood says (pp. 130-131) :

Even had the Japanese achieved footholds along the northern Australian coast, the advance towards populous areas would have involved the transport of men and supplies for great distances over a region of naturally scorched earth with very little natural cover for protection against the strafing that would have been concentrated on the few railways and surfaced roads. It is significant that the most powerful Japanese attack frustrated by the Battle of the Coral Sea should have been aimed not at the empty northern coast but at the most closely settled part of tropical Australia, the Townsville-Cairns region. . . .

These three factors, distance, command of the sea, and the presence of deserted Australia, with its concomitant, the concentration of our wealth and population in the south and east, as far removed from Asia as it would be possible, should be fundamental to our thinking on the relations between Australia and Asia. We lie not only to the south of Asia, but also far to the east. It is perhaps worth considering that a course laid due north from Canberra would not touch even the outlying islands of the continent but make its Asian landfall in Soviet Russian territory near the head of the Sea of Okhotsk.

At the present time Australian foreign policy is based necessarily on friendship with the United States of America. This necessity arises as much from our insular character and the American command of the sea as it does from any cultural or other affinities between the two countries. It is worth asking to what extent our continued survival as a Western and democratic country is essential to the well-being of America. We are all aware of the contribution that America can make to our own safety, but every transaction of

#### THE NORTHERN APPROACHES

this nature must be viewed as being mutually advantageous to the parties concerned. So we must consider dispassionately what advantages our friendship offers the United States, apart from the general advantage that any friendship offers over hostility. In other words, would the submergence of Australia by Asia be an irreparable blow to American security?

From the point of view of political and military geography, the answer must be given as, No.

Professor Spate has touched on this question in his chapter dealing with 'Some Strategic Consideration of the Pacific' in *The Changing World* (p. 532).<sup>2</sup> In concluding this chapter he suggests that the American bases strung along the islands off the eastern Asian mainland are probably 'hostages to fortune'; he goes on to suggest that 'Perhaps the only outwork of the Western [i.e. American] Hemisphere in the Pacific which is really significant quantitatively and qualitatively, and at the same time reliable, is Australia'. These dicta would be difficult to gainsay. But they need to be reviewed from time to time and the implications arising from them examined.

On the assumption that the major focus of American attention in this hemisphere will remain directed towards the main centres of population and economic activity, of military and industrial strength, that is, towards Eastern rather than South Eastern Asia, it seems that we are rather too far removed in the geographical sense to be of much importance. This applies not only in peace-time but also in the event of war. We ourselves have been conditioned by the fact that Australia served as a base for American operations during the last war. But it is worth considering that this was a base for operations in the Southwest Pacific, and then only something of a subsidiary base. The main naval forces used in the battles of the Coral Sea and the Solomons came from, and returned to, Pearl Harbour rather than the Australian ports. Similarly, the main attack into the central regions of the Western Pacific and eventually to Japan itself, stemmed from Hawaii and the West Coast of the United States rather than from Australia. This situation arose from a simple economic appraisal of the distance factor which shows that the route from America to East Asia by way of Australia is unduly roundabout. After the latter part of 1943 forces from the Australian area were siphoned into the developing western movement, but as they moved north their supplies were increasingly brought to them directly from America. In the final stages of the war Australia can scarcely

2. W. Gordon East and A. E. Moodie (Eds.) *The Changing World; Studies in Political Geography*, Harrap, London, 1956.

A. J. ROSE

be counted as a major base, except for the clearing operations in the Indonesian Archipelago. The main attack came from America, and it came directly across the Pacific. Australia as a base was certainly not essential to the defeat of Japan.

This analysis, of course, carries the implication that the deployment of American power against Asia does not depend on the alliance with Australia. If we like, we can think of ourselves as the 'Southern Bastion' which is a flattering term for us to apply to ourselves. But in the situation of 1944 and 1945 there was really little need for our presence so far as the defeat of Japan was concerned. And occupation of offshore islands failed to shield Japan from American power. The issue in the Pacific was decided by seapower, not by territorial insulation.

Needless to say, this is not the whole story of our importance to the United States. A strong and populous Australia would carry military significance in its own right. And with the passage of time and the continued investment of American capital in this country, the progressive exhaustion of ensured supplies of strategic metals essential to the American economy within the American Hemisphere, and the expansion of production of such materials in this country, there can be no doubt that the present association will become increasingly attractive to the United States.

The ultimate danger to Australian security lies, and must always lie, to the north and north-west. Geographically we are separated from this threat by sea, distance and desert. It is probably a valid interpretation of the events of 1942 that it was the consideration of distance that led the Japanese to abandon their southward thrust at the stage when the conquest of the Indies had been achieved. Their raids on the northern Australian coast were raids only, and certainly do not appear to have been seriously considered by the Japanese themselves as the prelude to any full-scale invasion of Australia. Similarly, their expansion into the New Guinea-New Britain-Solomons area in the second half of 1942 appears from an assessment of the pertinent Japanese documents and statements not to have had as its prime objective a springboard for an attack on the eastern Australian mainland, although if successful it certainly could have been used for this purpose. Rather, the Japanese strategists saw this movement as one to consolidate southern outposts of their own defence system, a system extending along a line northward through the Solomons and Marshalls to the Aleutians, and intended to give protection from the inevitable American retaliation that would be directed westward across the Pacific. To the Japanese the New

### THE NORTHERN APPROACHES

Guinea-Solomons line was a defensively-manned flank garrison rather than the spearhead of southward advance.

Irrespective of the situation in 1942 and 1943 it is clear that the most economical way for any Asian country to conquer Australia is to make use of the stepping stones provided so conveniently by the vast East Indian archipelago. The northern wing of the archipelago can be considered as starting with the island of Taiwan, immodestly close to the mainland of China. The northwestern wing comprises territory, the Andaman and Nicobar islands, already in the possession of the second most powerful government in Asia, the Indian Republic. The two outer wings of the archipelago sweep south and east to coalesce in New Guinea, then scatter themselves again in a further eastwards projection that reaches as far as Tagula and Rossel islands in the Louisiade group and San Cristobal in the Solomons. In all this vast region no island is more than 100 miles from the nearest neighbouring land; and the whole system approaches within a similar distance of the Australian mainland in Cape York Peninsula. There would be little risk even for dugout canoes in making the journey over the entire length of the archipelago. So far as Australia is concerned we regard the eastern culmination of the archipelago, New Guinea, as the area that is really vital to our defence. At the same time it must be admitted that this is an eastern Australian viewpoint which may not necessarily be shared by an audience in Perth who have experience with direct air connections to Jakarta and Singapore. In any southward march the conquest of this entire island world would seem the necessary prelude to an invasion of Australia.

Before examining the fundamental geopolitical character of the archipelago region itself it is necessary to review briefly what we have in mind when we use the term 'Asia'. In reference to area there is no doubt that we tend to exclude the Arab countries of the Middle East and the vast tracts of northern Asia that are ruled and settled by Europeans from Russia; we mean, in short, the zones variously referred to as Asiatic Asia, Monsoon Asia, Southern and Eastern Asia; the whole great world that we have been learning to call the Near North. We generally consider the smaller region more generally known as Southern Asia to be part and parcel of this wider realm. Our concepts of this world are dominated by the characteristics of its population, which we usually think of under three headings. Racially we are aware that there are differences from area to area, but in every case the dissimilarities of physiognomy are sufficiently clear to set these people off against our own fair complexions; we are

normal European types, they are different, and, by implication, not normal. We enshrine this belief in our national policies by sponsoring European immigration and rigidly excluding Asians. Secondly, these people appear to us to live at an economic level far below any that could be considered desirable; they must work far harder than we do to meet the needs of bare subsistence. This lends a powerful economic argument to our exclusionist policies, for in the face of such competition our own levels of consumption would inevitably be depressed. Thirdly, they persist in breeding and reproducing their numbers with frightening rapidity, pressing ever more heavily on the resources of their own land. Such overcrowding contrasts jarringly with our own empty spaces. Aware of these contrasts between Asia and Australia, we then reverse our projection and assume that all these people must be casting covetous eyes upon our own good fortune and our own broad acres. Periodic statements made by Asians tend to confirm us in this view that our unused resources are the cynosure of covetous Asian eyes. Our affluence and slender numbers, we feel, make Australia the inevitable target for Asian territorial expansion.

This picture is, of course, over-generalized. Viewed even from the single aspect of economic geography it is quite evident that there are degrees of poverty and overcrowding in Asia, and that on this count alone, the comparative attractions of Australia, insofar as they do exist for these people, will vary from country to country. Relatively the pressures on subsistence are most severe in India and China, and little felt in most of the Southeast Asian countries, a number of which are in fact major exporters of basic commodities. But more important than the consideration from economic geography is that from the field of international relations. Our common view springs from the assumption of unified Asian pressure on Australia and our fears arise from the possibility of a concerted Asian *Drang nach Süden*. Here we reckon without the Balance of Power. Modern Asia is, after all, just as much a congeries of national states as ever Europe was in recent centuries. Consequently there seems little reason to believe that the territorial expansion of any single Asian state would for long go unchallenged by its neighbours, irrespective of the action that would be taken in this regard by the United States, which must also be considered. National jealousy alone should be sufficient, in view of the number of states concerned, to invoke the Balance of Power. A sufficient pointer can perhaps be inferred from the reaction of India to recent events in Tibet; it might be too soon to suggest that this has resulted in any definite *rapprochement* of India and Pakistan or of India and the United States, but at least

#### THE NORTHERN APPROACHES

it has facilitated the removal of some of the earlier mistrust. We shall be foolish if we continue to regard all Asia as a potential menace when in fact the situation is really the traditional one of fluctuating national interests and power politics.

It would take a stout heart to deny that Indonesia is of the essence of Asia. All the hall marks are there: a culture with its Indian substratum and dominant overlay of Islam; agricultural systems that are either the subsistence varieties of shifting or intensive cultivation, or the imported variety of plantation agriculture that remains a legacy of the earlier political stability imparted by rigorous European rule; peoples whose racial origin clearly stems from the continental mainland; and the consciousness of a new national growth born out of a common opposition to European domination. No place could be more characteristic in its leading social elements of the things that we associate with Asia. This goes right down to the fact that the population of Indonesia is, without doubt, teeming, and what is more Asian in our eyes than a teeming population?

These facts, the facts of the typical stereotype, are not to be denied. And Indonesia is rather close in the geographical sense . . . not as close as Siberia is to Alaska or East Germany to West, but close enough. The proposition that I should like to offer for consideration here is that, despite the clear stamp of Asia, Indonesia need not necessarily act in the way that our concept of Asian countries at large implies that she must eventually act. Now, if Indonesia does not regard us in the way that our own stereotype demands that all Asian countries should regard us, if in fact Indonesia finds that her geopolitical position gives her certain common grounds with Australia, we can assume that the problem of Asia as we interpret it is possibly not quite so immediate and pressing as we usually think. And if we can establish this case, then the strategic importance of New Guinea is considerably diminished; we can regard the problems of New Guinea without the complication imparted by the consideration that it is of overwhelming strategic importance to eastern Australia. And this alone could be a valuable clarification.

I want to suggest here that the intrinsic geographical character of Indonesia sets her off from what we think of as being Asia; that the pressures that, in our opinion, might cause other Asian countries to cast covetous eyes on the space of our continent and the wealth of its inhabitants may be absent from Indonesia. And I would carry this further to argue that of all countries, Indonesia has most to fear from any southward drive by a major Asian power. And what applies

for Indonesia applies in a greater or lesser degree to all the lands of South East Asia.

Within Java itself much is made of the considerable land resources of the Outer Islands, particularly of Sumatra and Borneo. These areas are looked upon as the natural safety valves of the expanding Javanese population. There is no need to argue here that these concepts may be rather facile. My point is simply that land resources exist in Indonesia, that the fact of such reserves is generally recognised, and it can be assumed that neither the Javanese nor the Indonesians at large would want to see these areas settled or otherwise controlled by outsiders. This point is all the more pertinent because Indonesia presents the neighbouring more crowded Asian countries with the only extensive tracts of more or less virgin paddy land within the hemisphere. There are in addition the oil fields, which, although not comparable in their magnitude either of production or reserves with the oilfields of the Arab countries of the Middle East, would nevertheless be a useful adjunct in the industrialization programme of any country. Tin and rubber are additional magnets which would place a successful intruder in a strong international trading position. Then, too, the forests of Indonesia present a worthwhile if little-explored resource for timber-hungry countries to the north. The known resources of Indonesia must appear to most Asians, as indeed they did to the Japanese, as far more promising than the desiccated lands of the remote Southern Continent.

My second point is that Indonesia is trying to develop a national consciousness, that in fact penetration by outside nationals irrespective of creed or colour tends to be regarded with a jaundiced eye. Although the assertion of national independence is made most emphatically with regard to the old colonial masters, the Dutch, it is also carried over into general national policy. Thus, British plantations are not looked upon with much more favour and the reluctance of Indonesia to accept American aid-with-strings is part and parcel of the xenophobia common to states that have won their independence through violence. The Eastern European countries in the inter-war period exhibited similar characteristics, and Communist China today provides probably the best example of this thoroughly natural reaction.

The Indonesian reaction is most clearly apparent in the case of the Chinese. The lauded 'Spirit of Bandung' has broken down here, as elsewhere, and the inadequacy of common antipathy towards the old colonial powers as the basis for regional international co-operation is clearly revealed. The stranglehold of Chinese residents on

#### THE NORTHERN APPROACHES

Indonesian commerce has already generated its own reaction, and the racial exclusiveness of these people has tended to accentuate the impression that they form something of a fifth column that could operate in the interests of the strongest economic and military power in the Orient. While attempts are made to maintain a surface harmony in relations with the Chinese governments the underlying reality gives the impression of fear of Chinese penetration. Indonesia's adherence to Islam is another point which distinguishes her sharply from China.

These considerations lead inevitably to the conclusion that Indonesia, by virtue of her inherent social and resource patterns, and despite the typically Asiatic way of life of her people, need not necessarily be regarded as the spearhead of the southward thrust of Asia towards Australia. She stands to lose as much from such a thrust as we do. In terms of Asian modes of existence she has more resources to offer expansionist powers on the mainland than has Australia itself, she is nearer, and she is more accessible. For these reasons I find it highly improbable that the threat that we consider inherent in the gradation of the ratio between population and resources between Asia and Australia is likely to arise from Indonesia. That republic is in virtually the same boat as we are in Australia. Admittedly she is poor, but the rags seem to hide some highly desirable features. She is like Australia in another sense, that so long as her friends control the sea she is reasonably insulated from land-based military operations. Conversely, without sea-control, she is exposed, as her lands were in 1944 and 1945, to invasion from the east, from Australian territories, just as much as she had been a few years earlier to the forces from Japan. Even under a communist regime, Indonesia is as little likely to invoke mainland aid to gain Australia as Yugoslavia would be to call in the Red Army to help conquer Trieste.

If there is merit in the geopolitical argument that in fact Indonesia and Australia have much in common in their external relations and would react similarly to any threat from further north, I think it is fair to say that Australians need not be so worried about the ostensible strategic importance of either East or West New Guinea. It is true that New Guinea forms the last significant unit among the stepping stones that link Australia with Asia. But the present analysis suggests that our frontier against the Asia which should give us cause for concern is far deeper than our popular concepts indicate. New Guinea is a staging base rather than a front line fortress. And, in the event of naval inferiority, it would of

course be a liability, a potential trap for forces which could be cut off from their home base, rather than a military asset.

It is desirable to strike a note of caution at this point. Although it is clearly not in the interests of Indonesia to encourage Asian pressure on Australia, for the reason that the effective application of such pressure would presuppose the presence of foreign Asian forces on her own soil, it might be that Indonesia could entertain ambitions of dominating Australia by her own unaided strength. In other words, if the other nations move towards Australia, Indonesia would be liable to resist such a movement because her territorial integrity would be impaired by the process; but if there were sufficient assurances of the inability or unwillingness of northern countries to become involved, she might try to 'go it alone'. This is improbable, but conceivable. At present the only stable thing about Indonesia is its instability, and in such a situation rationality can be thrown to the winds. At the moment there can be no doubt that Australia would be more than a match for Indonesia militarily. In the future, if and when economic expansion gets under way, the situation may change, and Australia might come to assume the appearance of a desirable outlet for Indonesian imperialistic energies. But these are possibilities rather than probabilities, and the present geopolitical situation appears unlikely to change its character, irrespective of the relative strengths of the two countries.

Notwithstanding the validity or otherwise of the arguments given, it is necessary to examine the New Guinea area on its own account, if only briefly. The argument has already been opened and rather fully explored elsewhere on the future status of New Guinea. The options of status seem to range all the way from an indefinitely prolonged control by outside powers to the cession of the Western half of the island and its integration with Indonesia, and to the establishment of some sort of federated Melanesian State in the east. These options come in various combinations. There is no need to add to this particular discussion at the moment. But it is worth casting a geographic horoscope of our own future relations with these islands.

We shall always have with us people who maintain that the occupation of New Guinea is vital to the military safety of Australia. This may or may not be so, but there are other considerations of greater concern to our interests than this. It would be foolish, for instance, in the event of the eventual appearance of New Guinea nationalism, to insist that Australian military occupation should be maintained if it was not desired by the native government of the area. This way leads to the dangers of Algeria. And I am not one

#### THE NORTHERN APPROACHES

who can foresee the day when New Guinea would be admitted to the Australian Federation as a New State. Distance and cultural disparity effectively rule this out. In the long run we must decide just what sort of relationships we want to develop with the inevitable new nation of New Guinea. Our conception of the future should determine our actions as much as considerations of past actions in fact do. We must, for instance, ask if the erection of a premature independent state on rickety but sufficient foundations may not be preferable to the eventual emergence of a state that feels that its resources have been exploited for too long by white southerners, a state that feels that it was deliberately retarded on its road to national self expression by policies designed to slow modernization of the local social structure. These are serious questions, because our future relations with our nearest foreign neighbour-in-embryo are going to depend to a large extent on the policies we adopt in these questions now. Better a foreign but friendly New Guinea than a resentful colonial territory. Possibly better even a New Guinea deeded over to United Nations administration than a people who hate the sight of the Australian.

To a large extent the importance of New Guinea and Indonesia to Australia arises from their role as buffers or shields between us and the greater powers to the north . . . India, China and Japan. At the moment we can assume that the smaller countries of South East Asia will play an essentially similar role to Indonesia. In the present context the significance of the three northern countries lies in the fact that their populations are overwhelmingly numerous. In the face of such numbers even the achievement of a slogan to 'quadruple or quit' in preference to the more usual 'double or quit' would seem of little avail. By the time our population had quadrupled to forty million there is little reason to think that the population of China, for instance, would be less than a thousand million; if present trends continue it would be more likely to be over two thousand million. Even if there is safety in numbers it is difficult to see how even forty millions could ensure safety against such an overwhelming weight of humanity. This fact has been pointed out by others, but it needs reiteration. And to it must be added now the virtual certainty that the major Asian powers will not only increase numerically, but also expand their relative strength through industrialisation. In terms of sheer weight of numbers and material, we are in a hopeless position, and this is so irrespective of what we do about our own numbers and strength.

## SOME RECENT BOOKS ON INDONESIA

J. A. C. MACKIE

Since long before 1949 the hot-house atmosphere of Djakarta's political conflicts has been recognised as untypical of rural Indonesia. Decisions may be made there and, by a few people, fortunes too. But the changes which matter in Indonesian life are for the most part working themselves out in the small towns and the 48,000 villages of the archipelago under the influence of forces which can only marginally be directed by legislative or administrative fiat from the capital.

It is therefore not surprising that the struggle for political power in Djakarta has not attracted much concentrated study in recent years. Kahin's standard work on the politics of the Indonesian revolution from 1945-50 dealt with a period when the political struggle was concentrated on a single objective, independence; as soon as the goals of political activity became more diffused after independence had been achieved, attention shifted to the relationship between political parties, interest groups in the community and the policies of the governments, and the overall picture became much less coherent.<sup>1</sup> Two good but brief synoptic surveys of Indonesian political institutions and the broad outlines of party politics have been produced under the Cornell University Southeast Asia Program, in addition to their very valuable series of Interim Reports and Monographs on particular problems. But Indonesian politics is a frustrating subject for the political scientist, since many of the crucial turning points of her recent political history remain obscure; it is impossible to discern or document the motives of key individuals in the struggle for power, as their interpretations of events generally disguise more than they reveal. Any account of Indonesian politics is further complicated by the realisation that some of the most important developments affecting Djakarta politics have their roots in the social ferment of rural Indonesia, barely affected by the struggle for power in Djakarta and exerting only indirect influence on it.

A striking illustration of this point is given by a work which might at first sight seem peripheral to the study of Indonesian politics, Clark Cunningham's *The Postwar Migration of the Toba-Bataks to East Sumatra*.<sup>2</sup> Although directed primarily to social geographers or anthropologists, this work throws much-needed light on the puzzling local politics of the vital East Sumatran estate area. The crucial role of this province during the regional revolts of 1957-8 virtually determined the failure of the rebellion—and the care with which General Nasution and Dr Djuanda maintained a sort of 'Djakarta-Medan axis' showed that they were well aware of its vital importance as the essential pillar of the nation's economic unity. If either of the two abortive military revolts in the province had been successful or if its military commander had joined with those of Central or South Sumatra when they threatened to withhold export

1. G. McT. Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* (Cornell University Press 1952). Kahin has also edited two comparative studies with chapters on Indonesia by himself and Herbert Feith respectively: *Major Governments of Asia* (Cornell U.P. 1958) and *Government and Politics of Southeast Asia* (Cornell U.P. 1959). These will be separately reviewed in a later issue.

2. Clark E. Cunningham, *The Postwar Migration of the Toba-Bataks to East Sumatra*, Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1958.

revenues from Djakarta in late 1957, the central government could hardly have withstood the economic strain. Why then did regional dissatisfaction not carry East Sumatra into the rebel camp when it stood to gain more than any other province from the purely economic advantages of freedom from central economic policies? The full answer will have to wait on a much more comprehensive study of the precarious balance of forces in the local provincial politics, but the main outlines begin to emerge from Cunningham's account of the violent currents of social change which are transforming both the lowland estate area round Medan and, perhaps more fatefully, the Batak highlands. The energetic, assertive and well-educated Toba Bataks are pushing their way ahead in the military and civil administration of Java as well as Medan, with consequences which greatly complicate the local politics of East Sumatra.

The population pressures behind the Batak migrations had been building up for generations as the various *suku* spilled out through the Batak highlands from Lake Toba into the grim valleys around it and the milder foothills to the east. Mr Cunningham's method of focusing his account on the situation in one of these valleys, where 325 families (nearly 2000 people) had been cooped up in an area with less than 250 acres of arable land in 1940, shows how explosive the pressures had become in the few decades since Lutheran missionaries and a couple of tortuous motor roads opened the highlands to the outside world. A few Toba Bataks pushed down into the territories occupied by their less forceful cousins, the Karo and Simelungan, but Dutch policy prevented substantial migration down into the rich estate lands of the plains, damming the pressures up behind the authority of the east coast sultans and the strictly-enforced western land law applying to the estates. Thus Dutch policy 'allowed this immense garden to remain a peaceful stable unit, which promised to develop steadily, producing greater and greater wealth for its investors and its residents. But the dam was irreparably rent by the invasion of the Japanese in 1942. In the five years of occupation and the five years of revolution to follow, it was destroyed and washed away in a flood of migration and land occupation by nearly half-a-million people.' The problem of squatting has seriously disrupted estate agriculture in what is still Indonesia's richest region of export production—in particular the uniquely demanding rotation of cultivation needed for the valuable 'Deli-wrapper' cigar tobacco.

It is easy to say that the Indonesian government should be prepared to take firmer measures to evict or restrain the squatters (who are ably led by Communists in many cases) for the sake of the nation's export income. But the complexity of the social forces involved in creating or utilising new authorities in the new communities which have sprung up or in asserting the alien land law of the estates over squatter rights to the land under *adat* law emerges alarmingly from Mr Cunningham's second point of focus, which is one of the new squatter settlements on the fringe of a rubber estate. It is by no means only the Toba Bataks who form the squatter population and the problem had become virtually irremediable even before their later migrations swelled out, but this account brings out clearly the dynamic part these people are playing in the changes taking place. No wonder the regional authorities are reluctant to take firm measures against the squatters and the central government almost unable to.

The extra dimension which a regional study of this kind gives to our picture of Indonesian politics has also been explored by Clifford Geertz in various studies of the 'grass-roots' tensions in the Javanese countryside, which go far to explain

the fundamental cleavage between the Moslem and nationalist parties.<sup>3</sup> These arise out of the distinction between the individualist quasi-capitalist virtues enjoined by the orthodox Moslem 'santri' view of life and the 'abangan' synthesis of Islamic practices and heretical pre-Islamic beliefs so widespread in central and east Java, with its emphasis on the social virtues and inclination towards 'shared poverty' rather than individual inequality. Here again, what we now need are some case studies, which would have to be done by Indonesians, showing how this social cleavage is connected with party politics at the local level. The 'santri-abangan' distinction may be overstressed by Geertz (as some Indonesians allege) and it does not seem to correspond entirely with the division between 'orthodox' and 'modernist' Moslems which lies behind the Nahdatul Ulama-Masjumi split. But the connection between Islam and embryonic Indonesian capitalism is intriguing and arouses one's interest in the origins of the reformist movement in Islam.

Pre-revolutionary Islamic politics at the national level have been extensively described in H. J. Benda's *The Crescent and the Rising Sun*.<sup>4</sup> Although he only traces the development of Islamic influence in Indonesian politics down to 1945, when the Masjumi emerged from the Japanese occupation as the one broadly-based mass-organization in the country, his account puts the Masjumi into a historical perspective which goes a long way to explain its split with the N.U. and failure to dominate the 1955 election as had been expected. The political unity of Indonesian Islam which gave the Masjumi such a monolithic appearance from 1945-52 was deceptive, being immediately due to the circumstances of its establishment during the Japanese occupation and the struggle to displace the old priaji elite and secular nationalists from the power being transferred by the Japanese. Unity of the several Islamic organisations was achieved only with great difficulty in 1938 and Mr Benda gives a useful account of the prewar frictions between the modernist Muhammediyah wing and the conservative ulamas who first established the N.U. in 1926; it was then purely a religious body, its political identity emerging only after 1952. Benda's book is thus a useful introduction to a topic of great importance in recent Indonesian history—the rivalry of different elites—as well as a comprehensive summary of the Japanese occupation.

Where Benda and Geertz tell us a good deal about the organization and sociology of Indonesian Islam, they say very little about the actual doctrines. Unfortunately not much help is given in *Aspects of Islam in Post-Colonial Indonesia* by C. A. O. van Nieuwenhuize,<sup>5</sup> although this book contains two useful reprints of essays on Japanese policy towards Islam and the origins of the Darul-Islam movement in 1947-49. The other essays deal with the subject from an angle which is not quite theology nor sociology, and anyone not already familiar with Islamic dialectics will find them too hazy in general outline to be informative.

For an overall picture of the social and cultural ferment which has been going

3. Geertz originally stated this theme most convincingly in an article on *Religious Belief and Economic Behaviour in a Central Javanese Town: Some Preliminary Considerations* in 'Economic Development and Cultural Change', Volume 4, 1956. He has since published a fuller study under the title *Religion in Java* (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1959).

4. Harry J. Benda, *The Crescent and the Rising Sun* (van Hoeve, 1958).

5. C. A. O. van Nieuwenhuize, *Aspects of Islam in Post-Colonial Indonesia* (van Hoeve, 1958).

#### RECENT BOOKS

on in Indonesia since intensive Western penetration began to uproot the traditional society last century, one of the best works is still W. F. Wertheim's *Indonesian Society in Transition*.<sup>6</sup> Although he too is a sociologist, he deals with each field historically rather than analytically, contrasting the key features of social organization at different stages of development. Some of the images he introduces into his account tell a large part of the story by themselves—the dichotomy between 'harbour principalities' and 'bureaucratic inland states' before 1700, the intensified impact of the Europeans after the industrial revolution when they appear 'in a new guise, in the role of confident organisers', the consequent 'flight from the West' by the Indonesian rulers towards either Islam or a more intensive devotion to the traditional Javanese courtly civilization, the rise of a 'colonial caste structure' based on race, which played as powerful a part in keeping Indonesia subject in the 19th century as the machinery of repression or economic exploitation. Wertheim packs a mass of solid information behind these evocative phrases, particularly on the political and economic changes which accelerated rapidly between 1870 and 1940. This historical background must be taken into account in any discussion of the ferment and apparent rootlessness of modern Indonesian life. There was neither the time nor the encouragement for a new Indonesian elite to establish itself during the colonial period or to develop new forms of cultural self-expression which could bridge the gulf between traditional and modern values. Professor Wertheim doubts if the tendencies pointing towards increasing individualism will last. 'Individualism has appeared, in Asia, too late on the scene to achieve its full maturity. New criteria of social prestige will soon emerge within Indonesia's society. The social prestige enjoyed by the intellectual and near-intellectual class, which, with a section of the feudal nobility, forms at the moment the social upper crust will not go long unchallenged. Social prestige is increasingly being determined by criteria connected with the struggle between collective groups.' In this respect Wertheim looks upon the individualist bourgeois current in modern Indonesian Islam from a quite opposite viewpoint to Geertz; but despite some palpable hits against the 'reactionary' tendencies in modern Islam, his discussion of this critical question is not entirely satisfying.

The unravelling of different strands of Indonesian social development in recent generation leads the student into fields where a knowledge of its earlier history becomes essential. An excellent example of this is given in Schrieke's report on *The Causes and Effects of Communism on the West Coast of Sumatra*, written after the abortive risings of 1926-27.<sup>7</sup> The sudden impact of new commercial opportunities on a traditionally closed society brought about the social dislocation and unrest which the Dutch equated with communism; quite apart from the light it throws on the political tensions of a society in transition, this report contains valuable material on the rapid adoption of new commercial crops by communities which had been purposely isolated from trade with the outside world by the colonial policy of the 19th century. This work is part of the very useful series of *Selected Studies on Indonesia* by Dutch Scholars, translated and edited with immensely valuable bibliographies and references under the supervision of Professor Wertheim: the high standard of publication by van Hoeve adds distinc-

6. W. F. Wertheim, *Indonesian Society in Transition* (van Hoeve, 1956).

7. B. Schrieke, *Indonesian Sociological Studies* (2 volumes, van Hoeve 1955 and 1957).

J. A. C. MACKIE

tion to a most interesting series. The 'sociological' bias in the titles need not deter anyone, since most of these works are essentially historical studies of particular problems. The best of Schrieke's essays is an account of *Shifts in the Political and Economic Power in the Indonesian Archipelago in the 16th and 17th centuries* —a skilful correlation of changes in trade patterns with the rise and fall of the independent sultanates which confronted the first European venturers in the area.

The trade of the Asian merchants at that time was neither organisationally nor quantitatively surpassed by that of the Europeans, according to J. C. van Leur's *Indonesian Trade and Society*\* which draws voluminously on early accounts of the eastern trade (including such gems as 'Malacea, where all exquisites are . . . yea, even if one wanted to load a ship of six hundred ton with them'). The sociological categorisation seems rather strained in his earlier works, but it is convincing in the argument that the 'Hinduisation' of Indonesia should not be attributed to traders of Brahminical caste.

Finally, what is still the most convenient history of Indonesia, Vlekke's *Nusantara*,<sup>†</sup> has just been republished after being unobtainable for years. The original 1943 edition tended to become a history of Dutch colonial policy, although its early chapters on the pre-Dutch period were readable and informative. The new edition has filled out these sections considerably and in the later parts the author has allowed himself to be more critical of the conservatives dominating Dutch colonial policy just before the war. It is perhaps not without significance that much less emphasis is given to the Ethical Policy than in the earlier edition. In 1943 it was still possible to believe that the Ethical spirit still prevailed and could solve problems of diminishing welfare which brought it about. Today we can see that it had died long before and the problems remained unsolved when Indonesia became independent.

## REVIEWS

NATO AND THE FUTURE OF EUROPE. Ben T. Moore. For the U.S. Council on Foreign Relations. New York, Harper & Brs., 1958, pp. xviii + 264. Australian price 56/6.

This book is the outcome of some intense study by Study Groups of the U.S. Council on Foreign Relations and the author acknowledges especially his indebtedness to the Nestor of U.S. international affairs understanding, Philip E. Moseley. It is a thorough and moderate book and may well serve as required reading for anybody or any seminar taking an interest in the problems of European union as a part of international affairs. It is given to few Americans to write about Europe as dispassionately as does Mr Moore.

The average American just cannot understand why a piece of land vastly smaller in surface area than the USA cannot live on the same footing of national union as do the States of the Union, despite all fevered local patriotisms. For US readers who feel this query agitating their minds, Mr Moore's book will unfortunately not help much. This is a sophisticated book, produced by a group of enquirers familiar with all the tricks and turns of post-war European politics. Where Mr Moore does provide a flood of information is on the actual devices which have been developed since 1945 in Europe in order to

8. J. C. van Leur, *Indonesian Trade and Society* (van Hoeve 1955).

9. B. H. M. Vlekke, *Nusantara* (van Hoeve, 2nd revised edition, 1959).

## REVIEWS

take the first halting steps along the road to the apparent Utopia of a United States of Europe. The reader lays down the book with a complete knowledge of NATO, OEEC, the Coal and Steel Community, the European Payments Union and all the many and varied mutual help bodies which have been developed up to now (little has been done since 1958, so that the book is still admirably factual). But he learns little of either the background of the difficulties besetting European integration or the present internal difficulties which make further progress along these lines a matter of conjecture.

Of course Mr Moore points out some of the difficulties. He notes the fact that Great Britain holds herself very much aloof from formal commitment to most of the unifying bodies and he states in some places that this is because of commitments to the Commonwealth and other attitudes necessary for a country that still feels itself to be one of the major Powers. But there is no mention at all of the economic difficulties of mid-20th century Britain and the unseen economic tug-of-war between modern Britain and revived Germany. Similarly the picture of French collaboration in European movements has been obscured through Mr Moore's probably deliberate exclusion from his calculations of the desperate last-ditch struggle of the French to retain their overseas Empire. Without mention of Algeria the de Gaulle phenomenon is a mystery—and without some mention of the de Gaulle phenomenon in its latest manifestation, France's role in European union is merely seen as erratic. Though Mr Moore does occasionally touch on outside political history, as when he notes Ireland's continued military neutrality because of that country's feelings towards Britain over the northern counties, he scarcely mentions the complete farce of NATO's Mediterranean defences as a result of the continued bad feeling, to say the least, that divides Greece and Turkey.

In fact, Mr Moore is at his weakest when he deals with those intangible political factors which are keeping European grass-roots political sentiment so much behind the diplomatic superstructure. The awful fact, as the effect on British public opinion of the Suez affair showed, is that the fierce economic struggle for survival has made most Europeans more chauvinistic and not less. It has intensified, too, a fact which Mr Moore notes without, unfortunately, developing the instinctive anti-Americanism of many in Europe, including Britain. Most of the achievements of the various inter-European bodies have been achieved, in fact, against public opinion in the various countries rather than because of positive support. Such modest successes as have been achieved by the Coal and Steel Community and the Council of Europe (in the rather remote fields of Human Rights and Social Welfare) still fail to touch the hard core of national chauvinism in Europe.

In two excellent concluding chapters Mr Moore notes some of the attitudes which it is desirable for the Americans to adopt at this juncture. One of his mild surmises is that European union might be achieved as a reaction to the resurgence of Africa and Asia. He tends to deplore this possibility as one not pure in motive. Yet the cruel truth is that all pan-European movements since 1945 stem primarily from a felt need for defence—in the first place against Communism. It has been said that, if the USSR became friendly, the opposition to the move to closer union would sweep away all the small beginnings of concerted action. Today it would seem even more likely that concerted action will come, not only as a reaction against Communism, but also now against colonial nationalist successes.

This is a sombre prospect and it is not lightened by those considerations of NATO's role in the 'cold war' strategic picture, which Mr Moore discusses

## REVIEWS

in the official American fashion, that is to say, with little feeling for the fears of Europeans whose homes are in the first line of fire of the missiles with atomic warheads. This makes his book seem detached and even unreal at times. Perhaps this is a constituent of US official thinking on Europe altogether. For a fuller picture one would demand more on public opinion in Europe. And also something on the fundamental economic picture—the inter-European ramifications of Industry and the European links of US firms. But, making these reservations, one can recommend Mr Moore's description of the surface phenomena of what is still, in most respects, the centre of world politics.

Derek van Abbé

**THE ATLANTIC TRIANGLE AND THE COLD WAR.** *Edgar McInnis.*  
University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1959, pp. viii + 163. \$4.50.

The president of the Canadian Institute of International Affairs has drawn upon his personal experience in discussions on Anglo-American-Canadian relations, at and since the Montebello Conference of 1955, to write an informed and challenging essay on contemporary international politics. Its subject is the role of the three Atlantic nations, United States, United Kingdom and Canada, inside and outside the NATO alliance, under cold war conditions. As might be expected of an author who was formerly a member of the professorial staff of the highly respected History department of the University of Toronto, Dr McInnis's analysis of current trends in the relationship between his own country, its trans-Atlantic partners and both its European allies and its major opponent reveals philosophic depth and historical appreciation.

The theme of the essay runs freely through half a dozen chapters devoted in turn to discussions of the character and resources of the three nations, the bases of their security, the instruments by which that security may be sought, the interdependence of their several economic interests, their role as an 'Atlantic triangle' in the wider scene outside the NATO alliance and the significance of particular 'pressures and portents'. For Dr McInnis believes that 'The Atlantic Triangle is the fundamental bone structure of the western alliance and the western community and, without it, both of these would lack the effective solidity around which flesh and sinew are built.' It follows that each of the three partners must accept 'one inescapable consequence' conditioning all basic policy decisions. 'The price of unity is the acceptance of voluntary limitations on individual freedom of action.'

These limitations may be both positive and negative. Positively, they require not only consistent effort towards active shaping of common policies but also the pooling of confidential information—witness the adverse results, on the one hand, of precipitate British action over Suez in 1956 and, on the other, of American refusal to share atomic secrets. Negatively, they imply a willingness to refrain from action hostile to the considered views of one of the partners with which the other two cannot agree. In particular, the United Kingdom and Canada must avoid 'a chronically critical attitude' towards policies regarded by the United States as essential if its leadership was to be effective. 'They may legitimately object to steps that would be damaging to their national interests or would draw them into dangerous and ill considered courses; but, short of that, they must in the nature of the case give the maximum weight and support to American views even when these are not what they themselves would wish to advocate.'

## REVIEWS

This will no doubt be strong meat for some Canadian readers to digest but the author frankly recognises the limits set to Canadian foreign policy, as well as the advantages given to Canadian leaders, by this membership of the Atlantic triangle. Canada's emergence as an independent nation enables her to play a prominent part in world affairs, in the United Nations and elsewhere. But 'the basic pivot for her external policies remains the Atlantic region, where Britain and the United States are the two firm poles to which her essential interests are drawn.'

Australian readers of Dr McInnis's essay may find themselves coming back to this critical assessment and seeking to apply it to their own postwar situation. Geographically and historically, of course, Australia has neither Canada's degree of dependence upon, nor hypersensitivity towards the adjacent United States. Nevertheless our historic dependence on British aid in the past and our postwar recognition of the need for United States help in any future threat to Australia's security make the issue relevant enough. Some Australians would accept the McInnis answer as applicable in their case also. Others would argue that, since for Australia the basic pivot is not the Atlantic but the Pacific and Indian Oceans, and since Asia is in truth our next door neighbour, the desired goodwill of both London and Washington must be reconciled with substantial independence in Australia's Asian policies. This is not necessarily to reject either ANZUS or SEATO but to insist that, for Australians, neither should be identified with NATO.

While Australian readers may thus profitably use Dr McInnis's essay as a challenge to their own thinking, it is to be hoped that they will also follow through his argument for its own sake in its chosen setting. They will note, for example, in the chapters on security, the author's insistence that, in the Atlantic triangle's search for security and stability, containment by force should be accompanied by leadership of the non-Communist world on the basis of social and economic advance. Chapter IV on 'Economics and Interdependence' is one of the most stimulating parts of the essay. The author may perhaps have over-emphasized the dollar difficulties of the United Kingdom economy but his insistence on the political, administrative and historic difficulties in securing the broadest imaginative and expansive economic world leadership by the United States makes very good reading. His treatment of Canada's economic dependence on the United States, though not without an occasional trace of feeling, is restrained and consistent with his central theme. His discussion of the potentialities for the Atlantic triangle of the Common Market is also highly significant.

The book is no doubt directed primarily to readers in the Atlantic triangle. For this reason its emphasis is naturally placed on what the three Atlantic partners need to do to make the most of their joint and several contributions to the Atlantic Alliance and also to the wider community. It is therefore perhaps understandable that the author appears to minimise the complications which may result for the Triangle from other members of the Alliance, notably France.

*The Atlantic Triangle and the Cold War* is attractively presented by University of Toronto Press for the Canadian Institute of International Affairs. Typographical errors were detected on p. 23, 1.34 and p. 86, 1.24. Other readers may perhaps share the present reviewer's regret at the absence of an index.

*Fred Alexander*

## REVIEWS

SURVEY OF BRITISH COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS. PROBLEMS OF WARTIME CO-OPERATION AND POST-WAR CHANGE, 1939-1952. *Nicholas Mansergh*. Oxford University Press for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1958.

There has been a quickening of interest in British Commonwealth affairs since Sir Keith Hancock published the first volume of his Survey in 1937. This change has sprung from the experiences of war, in particular the shock therapy of 1940, but also from the growing awareness among thoughtful British people of both the relative decline of Great Britain in the world of power politics and the *reductio ad absurdum* of old fashioned power politics in the nuclear age. The debacle of Dunkirk and the collapse of French resistance forced Great Britain to reconsider her political and military strategy in relation to the Commonwealth and Empire. The course of events which brought to a victorious conclusion a long and exhausting conflict determined the configuration of the new, multi-racial Commonwealth of Nations that we have with us today. Indeed the very momentum of change continues to affect the development, and as new nation states such as Ghana and Malaya emerge, the Commonwealth as a phenomenon is not merely unique but exemplifies rare and creative inventiveness in political thought and action.

Professor Mansergh has taken us back to those years of war and its aftermath when this new world was in the crucible. The story of the Second World War in its civil and military aspects has been told by official historians, while particular phases of it have been described in memoirs, diaries, apologetias, long theses and short monographs. No one has thought fit or been able before to bring together the evidence that reveals the efforts at co-operation in war between major parts of the British Commonwealth. It is a story of mistakes and misunderstandings, of *ad hoc* planning and slow learning by painful experience. It is a condemnation of much that went before in the lean years, of lack of foresight, of intellectual inertia and sometimes plain stupidity which the chief partners in the Commonwealth shared in common. It is also a story of faith, endurance and deep-seated trust in the face of fearful odds.

In his study Professor Mansergh addresses himself to three questions. How far did the Commonwealth and Empire (a) co-operate in the prosecution of the war against Nazi Germany, Italy and Japan; (b) adjust itself internally to the changed conditions in the post-war world; and (c) co-operate in their policies in the international field after 1945? Almost one half of the work deals with the first of these questions, while the rest is devoted almost equally to the other two. The overall impression is of a well balanced, carefully documented, sober and authoritative work. The author has stood back from the scene and made a fair appraisal. His own personality is not permitted to intrude, though those who know him will doubtless recognise through his self-restraint his political preferences. For some people this style of writing may take from the picture of events some warmth and colour. For instance, he fails to catch the spirit of Commonwealth co-operation exemplified in the Commonwealth Air Training Scheme. For many Australians little enough notice is taken of the ratio of the R.A.A.F. operating in the European theatre from 1942 to 1945 and for many Canadians it would appear important to stress the number of Canadians who crawled along 'the soft underbelly of Europe' or crossed with the British to Normandy in 1944.

Nevertheless Professor Mansergh's fair-mindedness is everywhere striking. He is particularly sensitive to Australian and New Zealand fears, complaints

## REVIEWS

and reactions. In a manner that is still unusual in an Englishman he is able to appreciate Curtin's dramatic appeal to Roosevelt in December 1941, though he does refer to the shrillness of the tone. In other places he makes a calm and balanced appraisal of conflicting views on such questions as Irish neutrality, the Indian Congress Party's attitude to the war and independence, the strategic uses of Imperial forces. His account of the foundation of the Republic of India and of Pakistan is a model survey.

Professor Mansergh contents himself in general with recording the evidence. Nowhere is it his intention to argue a case, to defend, criticise or even analyse the constitutional implications of decisions reached. Still less does he discuss problems which arose from events but which were only vaguely, if at all, realised at that time.

There can be no doubt that the author has used the major sources and information open to him, in particular the official war histories and Churchill's war history, Sherwood and Harry Hopkins. Occasionally reference is made to newspaper files. Perhaps there is a paucity of information on the economic aspects of war co-operation. No doubt, too, the picture will have to be filled out in details once we have the story told by Mackenzie King, Menzies, Curtin, Chifley, Fraser and Smuts or by their biographers. Australian readers, for instance, will await with impatience further evidence on the negotiations in London and Washington, carried on by Australian Ministers, High Commissioners or special emissaries on how far Churchill tried to divert the Seventh Division to the South East Asia front; on why R. G. Casey left Washington for Cairo; on the failure to consult fully with General Blamey before committing Australian troops to the campaign in Greece in 1941.

But to be fair, this is a source book. It lays no claim to answer all questions. It is a measure of its undoubted value that it opens the mind of the reader to some of the grave and delicate problems that now face us — the need for co-ordination of policy in the international field, neutrality and neutralism, conflicts between Commonwealth members, economic development, relations of members to the power blocs and the overall strategic planning for the nuclear age.

W. A. Townsley

THE DECISION TO INTERVENE. *George F. Kennan*. Faber and Faber, 1958. Pp. xii + 513. U.K. price 50/-.

'I have been sweating blood over the question what is right and feasible to do in Russia. It goes to pieces like quicksilver under my touch', complained Woodrow Wilson on 8 July 1918. When the Bolsheviks seized power in November 1917 and then concluded the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with Germany in March 1918, the situation in Russia was almost as unstable as quicksilver. Lenin and Trotsky were struggling to consolidate their internal position: outlying soviets such as Murmansk had no firm allegiance to Petrograd or Moscow, left wing Socialist Revolutionaries were prepared to use assassination as a weapon in the intra-soviet struggle to control Moscow, and a variety of anti-Bolshevik groups hoped to carry out a counter-revolution. The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk had taken Russia out of the war, and a month later the German offensive in France went perilously close to success. Strong diplomatic pressure was exerted on Lenin and the Bolsheviks to alter the neutralist policy that they had adopted.

Kennan's second volume in his study of Soviet-American relations, 1917-20, is a masterly analysis of the complex diplomacy of the crucial six months

## REVIEWS

between Brest-Litovsk and the departure from Russia of the last American diplomats. Lenin realised, perhaps more clearly than Trotsky, that the survival of the new Soviet republic depended on perpetuating the rivalries among 'imperialist' powers, and that this could provide the necessary breathing space for internal political and military consolidation. The only possible Soviet policy was, therefore, 'to manoeuvre, to retreat, to bide one's time'.

Opportunities for manoeuvre were considerable in a situation in which Germany had no desire to become entangled in Russian politics now that Russia had withdrawn from the war and in which the western allies were divided on political and military tactics. Britain and France were anxious to re-open a second front against Germany by a Soviet invitation to intervene in defence of the new régime. The United States was reluctant to be drawn into a policy of intervention which could jeopardise the major military objective—the defeat of Germany in western Europe — by dissipating Allied strength and perhaps frittering it away in the quicksands of Russian internal politics. At the same time Washington was unwilling to commit itself to a policy which could alter the post-war balance of power in the Far East. For this reason, the United States began to distinguish sharply between possible Allied action in the Murmansk-Archangel area and in eastern Siberia. Early in May 'it accepted the possibility that there might be adequate necessity, from the standpoint of the prosecution of the war against Germany, for intervention in the Russian North. Finally, it accepted the somewhat dubious thesis that Trotsky had actually invited, and continued to approve, the Allied activity at Murmansk.' (p. 267).

Moscow in March 1918 resembled, as Kennan suggests, 'a vast, disturbed ant-hill'. But so also was Russia from the Carpathians to Vladivostock. It was vitally important for the State Department to obtain as accurate an assessment as possible of the internal political situation and of the objectives of the fluid Soviet policy. Kennan has drawn an absorbing picture of the cross-currents and the misunderstandings which bedevilled American reporting and policy during this period. Ambassador Francis, a shrewd poker player who had been Mayor of St. Louis, and who, Bruce Lockhart said, 'doesn't know a Left Social Revolutionary from a potato', moved cautiously from a policy of intervention by Soviet invitation to one of support for Allied attempts to re-open a second front by landings in Murmansk and Archangel. His consul-general in Moscow, Maddin Summers, was more sceptical about Leninist policies and believed the Bolsheviks to be German agents. Raymond Robins, chief of the American Red Cross Commission to Russia, pursued what the State Department called the 'Red Cross policy': collaboration with Lenin in an attempt to avert the danger of a German conquest of Russia. The friction between Francis and Robins led to mutual suspicion and a breakdown in communication between the two men. It reached its climax when Robins left Russia. Carrying with him an autograph letter from Lenin proposing a Russo-American economic agreement, he met Francis at the Vologda station. He made no mention of his letter, but a few minutes after Francis left the platform, Robins leaked it to the Associated Press correspondent. Francis on the other hand did not tell Robins that he had recommended intervention to the State Department. The difficulties of the American diplomats were enhanced by their partial reliance on Russian interpreters and secretaries, by Robins' use of Gumberg (who maintained his own communications with the Russian Foreign Office) as a personal aide and by the final breakdown of telegraphic communication with Washington.

## REVIEWS

In Washington itself these imperfect and conflicting reports led to indecision in policy. In this situation, the Allied Supreme Council attempted to force the State and War Departments to agree to Allied intervention in the face of Soviet opposition. Pressure groups inside and outside Congress attempted to jolt the State Department and President into activity. On 6 July, Woodrow Wilson agreed to intervene in spite of strong opposition on military grounds from General March. Two days later he agreed specifically to American intervention in North Russia. Kennan gives a disturbing picture of Wilson as an idealist, an academic and a humanitarian who appeared to have 'a curious aversion . . . to receiving anyone who had come from Russia' but who was anxious to help 'the Russians'. What he could not do was to answer Lenin's simple question 'What Russians?' Kennan concludes that Lansing and the President 'were partly the victims of misinformation — much of it deliberate'. They decided upon intervention in Siberia without consulting House, without any clear perception of the issues, and largely because of a sentimental concern for the Czech forces in Siberia. Sentiment is a treacherous guide to policy, especially in a situation which anticipated the problem facing the American ambassador in *The Ugly American*. General Graves was hastily appointed as Commander of the American forces in Siberia and given the briefest of instructions with this advice: 'Watch your step; you will be walking on eggs loaded with dynamite. God bless you and good-bye.'

Kennan has written a sedate but superb and scholarly diplomatic history of a critical period in American-Russian relations. With a deep understanding of the Russian scene and an intimate knowledge of the diplomatic process he has been able to chart all the eddies and currents that affected American policy in 1918. He vividly portrays the actors in the drama which vitally affected the course of Russian-American relations for more than a generation: Francis and Robins, Summers and Poole, Radek and Chicherin. His analysis gives depth and perspective to the work of Strakhovsky and White who pioneered research in this field. It also gives a convincing account and explanation of 'this failure in American statesmanship . . . Never, surely, in the history of American diplomacy has so much been paid for so little'.

Norman Harper

**COMMUNIST CHINA TODAY.** Peter S. Tang. Thames & Hudson, London, 1957-8, 2 vols., pp. 536 & 137. End maps. Australian price 97/6 and 42/-.

The difficulty of writing about the Chinese Revolution is that it is dynamic and constantly developing. China Today becomes China the Day Before Yesterday even before the book is in print. So Mr Tang's 'today' is in fact 1956. Inevitably, he cannot discuss the aftermath of the Blooming of the Hundred Flowers nor the Tibetan revolt, because these events had not then taken place. The Communists had not been invented, and the Higher Stage of Co-operative Farms were only in their first year of operation. Yet the book is still a very valuable, carefully documented, and exhaustive treatment of the period it covers, from the rise of the Communist Party in the late '20's to the time of writing in 1956. Mr Tang is not an ardent supporter of the Nationalist government now in Formosa, nor is he sympathetic to the Communist regime: he is clearly an ideological opponent of Communism, but rightly fails to see in the Kuomintang any viable alternative. Now living in America, his is the view of a disillusioned but clear-eyed Chinese intellectual democrat.

## REVIEWS

He therefore does not suggest that there is any likelihood of a counter-revolution, nor the overthrow of the Peking government unless as the consequence of a world war. He disbelieves in the reality of coexistence, doubting the sincerity of the Communist side, but offers no alternative except vigilance and reliance on American military power to frustrate the Communist objective of world-wide revolution. That this is the only position open to a Chinese who finds both parties distasteful cannot be denied: but it also reveals the reasons why, as the author recognises, very many of his fellow intellectuals have chosen to remain in China and work for the government in power. A dispassionate but negative approach to so great a revolution is an attitude most valuable in a historian, but unlikely to attract widespread popular support.

The great value of Mr Tang's book is as a source for the history of the rise and victory of the Communist Party in China. His careful analysis and description of the machinery of Party and state control, government and the armed forces, make his work an indispensable reference book for all students of this period. It is not a history of China in the past thirty years, for when events have no direct bearing on his subject, the rise of the Communist Party, he ignores or slides over them. For example, greater weight could be given to the effect on Chinese public opinion of the Kuomintang policy of appeasing Japanese encroachments in the period 1931-1937, while prosecuting the 'extermination campaigns' against the Communists with the full force of the army. Very many Chinese were turned against the government by this policy which, to them, seemed unpatriotic and fruitless.

Mr Tang is also apt to stress what he names the 'Moscow Orientation' of the Chinese Communist leadership. While recognising that Mao Tse-tung himself had never been to Russia, or even out of China, until 1949, he still places great emphasis on this orientation. One may ask, was it, firstly, not very natural that Communists should look to Russia, the first and then the only Communist state, for guidance and example, instruction and ideology? Secondly, to put the matter in perspective, it must be recorded that the 'Western Orientation' of the Nationalists was equally marked. If Chiang, like Mao, had never been to Europe or America, he had, like Mao, accepted a Western ideology (the Christian religion) and almost all of his important followers were men trained in European and American universities.

What must be acknowledged is that the generation of Chinese to which both the Nationalist and Communist leaders belong was a generation brought up in an age of China's national impotence, in a period when Chinese native ideologies, Confucian, Taoist or heterodox, were all discredited and denied, when the whole educated class was convinced that the only hope for the nation was to modernise on the Western model, and the only dispute among them was which model should be adopted. In this climate of opinion it was certain that Marxists would look to Moscow and anti-Marxists to America. What is still unsure and not yet clearly formed is the tendency which will dominate the outlook of the coming generation, now rising to manhood, to whom the period of China's eclipse is an old sad story, and the weight of China's new power a present and vibrant reality. There are at least some signs that this generation will be 'Peking Orientated'.

Some minor points may be noted and questioned. If it is a fact (page 51, footnote) that the smaller Red armies of the period down to 1931 never exceeded a few hundreds of men, then it is a tribute to the effective leadership of one such handful, the Second Red Army commanded by Ho Lung, that in 1930 this little force occupied a position on the Yang Tze river in western Hupeh from which

## REVIEWS

it disrupted shipping and could not be expelled by all the naval power of the Kuomintang, assisted, when British ships were trying to pass Temple Island, by bombardments from British gunboats.

The account of the Sian Incident (page 58-59) plays down the role of the Communists, particularly of Chou En-lai, in arranging the terms by which Chiang Kai-shek regained his liberty, and over-stresses the influence of Moscow in this matter. The testimony of Molotov to Patrick Hurley some years later does not necessarily concur with the facts. Similarly, the Nationalist attack on the New Fourth Army in Anhui in January 1941 was a far more important cause of the later breach between the two parties than is indicated here (page 61).

The use of the term 'purge' in connection with the fall of Kao Kang and Jao Shu-shih (pp. 81-82) may be questioned. There is no evidence, nor does Mr Tang produce any, that the disgrace of these two leaders involved any widespread purging of the Party. By contrast to the holocausts which in Russia have accompanied and followed similar expulsions of noted leaders, the Chinese seem to have handled the affair with restraint. This episode is just as often adduced as proof of the opposite thesis, that the Chinese Party conducts its internal quarrels with a moderation unknown in Russia, at least until very recently.

The incident (p. 461) of the Kashmir Princess, the Indian air liner bound for Bandung which was sabotaged on Hong Kong airfield by placing a concealed bomb on board, is not accurately stated. The saboteur was, as the Peking government alleged, later proved to be a Kuomintang agent; the Hong Kong government demanded his extradition from Formosa on a charge of murder, but the demand has never been complied with. The suggestion that the Peking version was unconfirmed, or untrue, is therefore wrong.

Volume Two contains a most useful month by month chronology of the Communist Party's history from the foundation in 1918 to 1956. It has also complete translations of the Constitutions (1945 and 1956) of the Communist Party, the Constitution of the People's Republic of China (1954), and a list of members of the various committees of the Communist Party. In respect of the chronology, a British reviewer may be allowed to enter one small protest. In Vol. 2 page 6 it is stated, 'May 30th. In the May 30th Massacre Chinese students demonstrating against British Imperialism are fired on by British police in the British Settlement at Shanghai.'

The facts are that the Settlement in Shanghai was the International Settlement, in which all Western nations having extraterritorial rights shared, the police in question were the police of this settlement, Chinese as to the ranks, commanded by an officer of British nationality, and the students were protesting against the action of the Settlement authorities in connection with a strike at Japanese textile mills in the International Settlement. The consequences of this incident were indeed formidable and of great assistance to both the Nationalist and Communist Parties, who exploited them to the full; but while the memories of those then present are still available to historians facts should be recorded correctly.

C. P. FitzGerald

THE BIRTH OF A DILEMMA: The Conquest and Settlement of Rhodesia. *Philip Mason*. Under the auspices of the Institute of Race Relations. Oxford University Press, 1958, pp. xi + 366. Australian price 49/9.

In the Epilogue, the author states his purpose. 'This book', he says (p. 321), 'has been an attempt to marshal certain evidence about the meeting of people

## REVIEWS

in Africa and the growth of a situation which presents the victors with a dilemma as yet unresolved.' Who were the victors? They were 'the Victorian English, the young light-hearted masters of the world, confident that their own achievement in every sphere of life was the best. . . .'

The dilemma arose from the contact of two peoples, Europeans and Africans, in Rhodesia. It occurred in the context of conquest, beginning with the march of the Pioneers in 1890, continuing with the Matabele War of 1893, and the rebellion of 1896 of the Mashona, and ending in a sense, in October 1897, when 'Kagubi, the chief purveyor of the Mlimo's oracles in Mashonaland, surrendered unconditionally. . . .' (p. 209). The white newcomer was master. But the Bantu was there to stay. Here was, and is, the dilemma which confronts the conquerors 'as soon as the last battle is won' (p. 312). Shall they aim to maintain their position by force and assure themselves of hatred: or 'aim at an equality which requires an immediate sacrifice of power' (p. 316).

Dilemmas breed dilemmas. The part of the community in power (and 'likely to be more intelligent and more detached in outlook') sees the second choice as the lesser evil. But how to convince their followers, to whom it represents immediate loss? And further 'Are they to belie all they stand for by denying freedom to others? Or must they forfeit their heritage by losing their identity, among an alien and defeated people? Shall they teach freedom and provoke revolt? Or shall they repress the lesson of their own history and themselves become as miserable and as leaden-eyed as is usually the fate of conquerors who are slaves to their own fears?'

Mr Mason's actual method of procedure is clear and candid. He tries to reconstruct a picture of Africa before the coming of the control of the white man. It is fascinating to see ourselves as others saw us. A contemporary of Livingstone remarks that to Africans we appear 'to be red rather than white' . . . and 'Blue eyes appear savage and a red beard hideous'. But, by a stroke of which Mr Mason is both fond and skilful in use, he counters the imbalance of English pique by remarking that 'much the same feelings would, of course, be aroused today by the appearance in an English village of a Matabele Induna in his traditional ornaments' (p. 23). There follow chapters which take the Bantu achievement before the Europeans came as a basis for considering 'how far their institutions and ways of thought might be expected to fuse with the newcomers' (p. 93).

Part Two then considers the conquest and settlement. Mr Mason tells the old familiar story with economy and point. Cecil Rhodes has his 'finest hour'. But victory wears a laurel of dilemma. With great skill and frequent and revealing exemplification, the author tells of the emergence of the doctrine, which argued the assimilation and integration of the African and the counter arguments of those who would 'preserve the gap'. There are admirable passages illuminating the ways of white Rhodesian life. A shuttling traffic of argument goes on within persons between reason and emotion, fear and initiatives for change. Separateness, however much some might aspire to it, and be reinforced by Darwinistic arguments, becomes a polar concept and not a practicable alternative in behaviour, given the ends which Rhodesians might wish to achieve, and the ends which the Imperial factor (or Colonial Office) was guardian to uphold. The tug of opposites is displayed in the luckless middle position of the Native Commissioner, midway between the voracious demand for the labour of apparently idling Africans, and the interdiction by the Colonial Office of methods of force to secure it. Double standards on matters sexual, and unhappy early

## REVIEWS

grafting of a jury system upon an, as yet, still evolving plural society, are covered and afford the author an opportunity to carry his analysis along in the congenial medium of scrutiny of some legal cases, he having been a magistrate in India.

There is brilliant summation in which he classifies some attitudes by use of the categories of missionary and game-warden. He derives the emergent conventions of behaviour by using a sire and dam approach to the many influences operating in the complex situation wherein the dilemma is manifest—the sire being the doctrine of assimilation, and the mother's side, the forces of white domination, segregation, separation.

The dilemma persists today, with this particular feature that the initiative rests not with the Mashona and Matabele, but with the masters. It is doubtless churlish to complain that we are not carried to the threshold of the current day in the Central African Federation. What we have in the book is the grand topography of the current juxtaposition of all the peoples of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Perhaps more could have been made of the economic root of the dilemma. The hiring of labour cannot retain its 'purely' economic character unless the hired man is treated simply as a 'hand'. In practice, some minimum social relationship is complementary to the economic transaction. The Doctrine of Separateness denies this latter proposition. The Doctrine is a revolting falsity as inspection of any developing economy will show. In Rhodesia, as elsewhere, equal and separate will not be equal, nor wise, nor humane, nor prosperous.

But these remarks are not intended to screen from view for one moment the lucidity and rigour of this analysis of Rhodesia. It possesses a power of involvement of the reader in its problem and its solution. In this quality, *The Birth of a Dilemma* illustrates the author's own dictum (p. 9) that 'no one who has not made his home in a country can understand it; true, but it is also true that no one can understand a country he *has* made his home'. Australians who, nevertheless, have not known Africa as home, may from without be led by this book to some understanding of Africa.

H. D. Black

THE SMALLER DRAGON. A Political History of Vietnam. Joseph Buttinger. Praeger and Stevens, Atlantic Books, 1958, pp. 535, with 9 maps and 13 plates. A SHORT HISTORY OF CAMBODIA. Martin F. Herz. Stevens & Sons, Atlantic Books, 1958, pp. 141. Australian price 34/6.

In recommending Buttinger's book the publishers quote Goethe's dictum: 'The truest chronicler of the past is one who writes out of concern for the present'. Both of these books present an opportunity of testing the dictum. Buttinger's interest in the history of Vietnam arose from his organisation of relief work among refugees from the North in South Vietnam. Herz, a U.S. Foreign Service officer, was stationed for two years in Phnom Penh. Both found that although a great deal of specialised historical material on Indochina existed (especially in French) no succinct histories of the countries they were most interested in had been written. Both proceeded to write them, and students now have two accessible books, in English, which open up the historical complexities and great differences of two parts of the anomalous entity we once knew as French Indochina.

'The reader', says Buttinger, 'has a right to know that I am hardly a professional historian . . . concern over the political consequences likely to result from ignorance in regard to Vietnam, rather than scholarly aspirations led to my

## REVIEWS

decision that *The Smaller Dragon* was the book I had to write.' His book nevertheless has a great deal of scholarly apparatus. Two hundred and sixty-eight pages of text, in six chapters, cover Vietnamese history up to 1900; the remaining 267 pages consist of notes, a modern chronology, bibliography and index.

Herz's book is on a more modest scale. According to him, 'It is, as will be readily apparent, anything but scholarly. It is short. It tries to bring the history of Cambodia up to date. And it is certainly unencumbered by an excess of knowledge, except for the very last chapter.' Mr Herz is too modest. The dominant theme of the preservation of Cambodian cultural and territorial integrity against the most unlikely odds, against the hated Vietnamese, the predatory Thais and the modern French, is well and unpretentiously handled. He shows a nice touch in handling various accounts of the abandonment of Angkor: 'These theories are interesting', he writes, 'but they are based on no evidence whatsoever.' The later part of the book is enlivened by an account of how Sihanouk runs the country. In a referendum in 1955, for example, the campaign slogan was 'If you love the King, vote white; if you do not love the King, vote black'. The vote was not secret. There were 925,667 white ballots cast and 1,834 black ones.

Buttinger has attempted a much more ambitious enterprise and has boldly tackled a vast mass of mostly French material. He admits that D. G. E. Hall's *History of South-East Asia* is 'the main work of a modern author on Southeast Asia as a whole' but finds it 'a difficult book to read and a controversial one in many aspects'. Professor Hall, in a guarded phrase, has expressed his 'respect for the wide range of historical sources consulted' in Buttinger's book but has presented (*Pacific Affairs*, March 1959) a formidable list of errors and oddities in the text. In his view Buttinger's over-concern with European activities in Asia has led him to under-emphasise important themes in Vietnamese history proper—the expansion of the Vietnamese Southward, for instance, their destruction of the Chams and colonisation of part of the Khmer (Cambodian) Empire.

It is clear that, in the view of this specialist, Buttinger's overriding aims have distorted his historical sense. Herz's natural inclination to defend recent U.S. policy in the area does not seem, however, to have upset his balance as an historian. *De dictis, perhaps, non est disputandum.* It all depends on who is exemplifying them.

Arthur Huck

THE RECONSTRUCTION IN IRAQ: 1950-1957. *Fahim I. Qubain*. London, Stevens and Sons, 1958.

Qubain's *The Reconstruction of Iraq 1950-1958* is a work remarkable both for its useful contents and its mistaken deductions. As a source-book it should prove invaluable to any student of Iraqi attempts at economic development. The material is detailed, the exposition is clear, the statistical data offer a mine of information. The entire picture that emerges is one which would have justified the author in the choice of 'The Construction of Iraq' for title rather than 'The Reconstruction'; for it is apparent that in those aspects of national life which Qubain surveys an attempt was being made to build upon precedents so flimsy that the effort can really be taken to have constituted an entirely new departure.

The book, originally a Ph.D. thesis, has been published under the auspices of the Foreign Policy Research Institute of the University of Pennsylvania. To a pre-July 1958 America, that is to an America as yet unenlightened by the

## REVIEWS

Iraqi Revolution, Qubain's thesis might have read as a record of proud achievement and a vindication of dollar diplomacy. The numerous construction projects such as the erecting of dams, developments in irrigation, communications, building, etc. represented a progressive economy upon which, it might have been thought, the Baghdad Pact was securely based. The various developmental projects showed promise of imminent accomplishment. At the time of writing the author anticipated that the cumulative effect of works nearing completion would become visible by 1960.

The importance of timing was well realised after World War II when, as Qubain puts it, 'the issue revolved itself into a race between reform and revolution'. We now know that the race has been lost. Where the author showed a lamentable lack of understanding in his subject was in his failure to appreciate that the numerous developmental projects upon which he so learnedly discourses could not of themselves meet the aspirations of a growing national consciousness. As long as the prevailing semi-feudal social structure was suffered to remain, all reform, as Qubain himself admits in his conclusion, was '... for the people, but not from them'. The creation of the Development Board was in line with the attempt described by Qubain to transform a rural and static society into an urban and dynamic one. This autonomous body of experts had its own revenue which, amounting to a clear 70 per cent of all oil royalties, gave it a budget greater than the government's. Yet, while these great resources were to be mainly used on spectacular construction projects, the peasant was to receive no immediate benefit from the activities of the board. This in a country where 70 per cent of the population was employed on the land and the peasants subsisted, as Qubain states more than once, as virtual serfs. The peasant population was to await the time when 'the government's investments began to pay dividends'.

While Qubain rightly sees in the problem of land tenure in Iraq the human problem par excellence, he believed that this problem could be outflanked. In his all too brief seventh chapter entitled 'Beneficiary of Reform—Landlord or Peasant?' he argued for the maintenance of great landlords on the grounds that the land was ideally suited for large-scale agricultural techniques. He offered no evidence of this save on the very inept and, in the prevailing circumstances of virtual servitude, incongruous and untenable analogy drawn from America, Canada and Australia. While the government, avowedly in the hands of 'factional groupings' was to proceed with a slow and gradual distribution of undeveloped State owned land, the big landlords, firmly entrenched in their own holdings, were to be induced by a slow process spread over decades to adopt modern farm mechanization methods as a means to a further increase in wealth. This would, in due time, by the oblique pressure of gradually rising living standards undermine the landlords' own position of privilege. Thus the very exploiters of the day were to prove the benefactors of the morrow.

In failing to see that the Iraqi problem was not primarily one of how to increase wealth but rather of how to attain a more equitable redistribution of existing wealth, not a problem to be solved in the future but one of immediate urgency, Qubain's thesis is fundamentally unsound. Nor does he make allowance for the emotive demands of a nascent nationalism but recently and as yet imperfectly liberated from the shackles of colonialism. The craving for dignity, both individual and national is a potent force furnishing the momentum of change. These omissions leave us with a sober manual which for all its comprehensiveness lacks insight and is misleading.

*L. E. Fleming*

